A DISCOURSE OF REGENERATION, FAITH and REPENTANCE.

Preached at the Merchants-Lecture in *Broad-ſtreet.*

BY

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

H. BATCHELOR 3 Dec. 1935

WHAT hath been already publiſhed in the hearing of many by Preaching, is now put into private hands by Printing; and becauſe 'tis eaſier to pleaſe many Hearers than one Reader, Let me (whoever thou art) beſpeak thy Candor in a few words.

Gen. Res. 12 Nov 34 Higham

Readers ſhould be Courteous; there is a Civility due to Books as well as Perſons: 'Tis not Manners to interrupt a Man in the middle of his Diſcourſe; and to cenſure a Book

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before you have read it out, is much the ſame. *He that anſwereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and ſhame unto him*, Prov. 18. 13. If what is here delivered, fall not in with your thoughts, I can only ſay this, That my deſign was, to write down my own Thoughts, and not other mens, ſubmitting all to the Judgment of the Scriptures: every one knows beſt what he thinks, what he believes, and is perſuaded of. A plain propoſal of the Grounds and Reaſons of our preſent Judgment, leaving 'em to their own weight in every Man's Conſcience, is to act like men one towards another; and the beſt way to communicate Light to thoſe who are willing to learn. We cannot differ about the Concluſion, when once we agree in the Premiſes; but to reſolve upon Concluſions firſt, is the ready way to put a Cheat upon our ſelves, whilſt we don't ſeek ſo much

much to find out Truth, as to make good our own Inventions.

To be born again, was a hard saying, *Nicodemus* could not receive it; knew not how to make sense of it. Had Christ intended only an outward reformation of Life, and not an inward renovation of Nature; he would not have explained our being Born again, by being Born of *Water*, and *the Spirit*, *Verse* 5. which are Evangelical terms of a much higher signification, and do imply a deeper change than that of Manners, which at best reduces us but to a practical conformity to those inbred Moral principles, belonging to our first birth as men; this is still but a state of Nature; we are in the same Spirit and Principle that ever we were. Where is the new Nature? that Spirit which is born of the Spirit, those supernatural Principles that are above all our natural Notions,

carrying us out directly to God in Christ? 'Tis Faith that gathers up these supernatural Truths out of the Gospel, and sets 'em home upon the Conscience with power, subjecting the Soul to the Divine Authority of the Word, without consulting flesh and blood about these high mysteries. Revealed Truths are strange things to a natural Man, and will never find acceptance with him, till his mind be suited to them by a supernatural irradiation; Heavenly things cannot be seen but by a Heavenly Light: when God shines in our hearts, then we are transformed into the very Image of those Truths which that Light discovers to us, and do experimentally know what that renovation of the Spirit is which the Word speaks of: Such Gospel Truths are put into our inward parts, as were never there before; this enables us to understand

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the Scriptures, to Read 'em with pleaſure; we delight in the Law of God in our inward Man: This Man within a Man, this hidden Man of the heart is the new creature, the genuine birth of the Spirit of God. If thou art ſuch a Man, thou art a true Chriſtian Reader indeed, willing to receive the witneſs of Chriſt, who ſpeaks what he knows, and teſtifies that which he hath ſeen, *Joh.* 3. 11. I have written this following Diſcourſe to you, *not becauſe you know not the truth, but becauſe you know it, and that no lie is of the truth,* 1 Joh. 2. 21. If any, who may be yet ſpiritually unborn, ſhall take up this Book, and Read it, they may ſee what they are not, how ſhort they come of that Character the Goſpel gives of new-born Souls: There are more *Nicodemuſſes* than one, who cannot unriddle the myſtery of *Regeneration*; they

they will understand nothing by it, but what they can bring 'emselves unto, by an outward Baptism; there is no Reasoning with these men; while they live in one Nature, and talk of another, they say they know not what; 'tis impossible to have a real feeling of that Nature that is not in us: He is a Skilful Limner, who draws to the Life; tho Life it self can never be drawn, some resemblances of Life there may be; the Cast and Colour of a Living Face, but no breath; like Painted Fire, without heat; or the Picture of a Man running, without any actual Motion; he is fixed in his first step; you will always find his feet where your Pencil left them, standing still in a running Posture. Thus it is with many Professors; they are as Pictures hung upon a Wall, dressed up in all the outward Formalities of Religion; you would take

take 'em to be real Saints; they have a name to live, but are indeed dead, without any inward living Principle of Grace to animate and quicken those forms, filling them up with true, real Holiness.

Acts flowing from a living Principle within, do carry their own evidence along with 'em, giving a pleasing sensation of their Truth and Reality, as the genuine off-springs of the heart, which nothing that is forced or counterfeit can do; The heart flows out with those actions that come from it, but secretly turns away, as unconcerned in every thing that doth not correspond to the inward Sense and Inclination of the Soul: This will help us to judg of our *Regeneration*, by observing the consent of our Minds to those outward acts of Religion we pass thorow; what Complacency and Delight we have in them, or what se-

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cret averſion to them, which we muſt needs be privy to; all mere imitations of Nature, are defective ſomewhere; this is more eaſily diſcernable, when we practiſe upon our ſelves, ſeeming to be what we are not; as Actors upon a Stage, under a Diſguiſe, who know we are not the Perſons we go for: When the New Nature comes into us, how kindly are the motions of our Hearts towards Chriſt? How welcome is he to us? We are never more in our own Element, than when we are in cloſeſt Communion with him; our Joy is then full, becauſe we have the very deſire of our Hearts; we are where we would be, we have what we longed for. Every unregenerate man, in the very height of his outward Profeſſion, belies his own Senſe and Experience, and ſays that of his Heart, which he knows he doth not ſpeak from his heart.

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When a humbling, overwhelming Senſe of Original Sin comes upon us, diſcovering the Univerſal Pravity of our Degenerate Nature, how is the glory of all fleſh ſtained? How vile and mean a thing is Man, born of a woman! he may well lye down in his own ſhame, ſtand behind the whole Creation of God, and bluſh at the miſchief he hath done the World, groaning with all his fellow Creatures to be reſtored to the glorious Liberty of the Children of God. Serious thoughts of our lapſed eſtate, muſt needs beget this ſelf-abhorrency in us, that we ſhould thus unman our ſelves, and become like the Beaſts that periſh, nay worſe than they, becauſe we cannot ſo periſh, as to ceaſe to be; the immortality of our Souls making us naturally capable of a miſerable Eternity; how ſhould we then be confounded in our own ſight, and be yet more

more vile in our own Eyes? We cannot presently take in the full sense of our wretched state; the grossest sins of our Lives, are not to be compared to the sins of our Nature; they might pass for particular acts of folly, which we were hurried into by the violence of some sudden Temptation; we might hope that Nature would recover it self; but that being poysoned and turned into a root of Bitterness, what fruit unto Holiness can ever grow upon such evil Trees as we naturally are? 'Tis not any improvement of Nature by Art or Industry, that will recover us; there must be a real Change of Nature wrought in us; and how few are convinc'd of the necessity of this? A Toad may as soon complain of his Poysonous Nature, as Fallen Man of his Corrupt Nature; we are reconciled to every thing that is natural to us, else it could not be natural;

ral; whatever is a part of our ſelves, can be no burden to us. 'Tis a ſign the Spirit of God hath been at work in that Soul, who is grown into a diſlike of himſelf, hating what he is, and what he doth from a carnal Principle. 'Tis a ſign there is another Spirit and Principle ſtirring in him. 'Tis impoſſible there ſhould be true Grace in that Man, who hath no afflicting ſenſe of indwelling ſin. The fleſh is fleſh ſtill, even after Regeneration; the New Creature is raiſed up in the preſence of the old man, they live together awhile, tho' at continual variance, till the fleſhly part be aboliſhed; then the new creature will ſtand up by it ſelf in a perfect ſtate of Glory, in the ſtature of a perfect Man in Chriſt. Sin, tho it cannot hinder the Birth of the New Man, yet it hinders his growth, and depreſſes that for a ſeaſon, till Mortality, with all that belongs to it, be quite

quite ſwallowed up of that Eternal Life, which we derive from Chriſt in our Regeneration; if we dye ſtrangers to this life of God and Godlineſs, we with all our Forms, Names, and ſpecious Pretences to Religion, ſhall be ſwallow'd up of Eternal Death, and never ſee the Kingdom of God. *Verily, verily, except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.*

T. C.

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DISCOURSE

OF

Regeneration. &c.

From *JOHN* iii. 3.

The Introduction.

THE Sound of theſe Words at the firſt reading, may convince any Conſidering Perſon, That Chriſtian Religion is a great Myſtery; the way to underſtand it aright, is to look into the internal Parts of it, not into the Words, but Power of Godlineſs. Many and various are the outward Forms by which Profeſſors are unhappily diſtinguiſhed, pleaſing themſelves with different Superſtructures upon the ſame ſuppoſed Foundation; *But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon,* 1 Cor. 3. 10. There

is Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones, in ſome Buildings; and too much Wood, Hay, and Stubble in others. Before I ſet fire to this by a ſpirit of Judgment and Burning, let us all examine our Foundations, and ſee whether the whole Houſe is not to be pulled down, and built anew; we had better pull down a Houſe weakly founded, than ſuffer it to fall upon our heads, then we periſh in the ruins: My Text leads me to this ſearch. I hope you will all join with me in feeling for the Rock; if we find it, we may with more comfort and ſucceſs ſet upon the mending and repairing what is amiſs otherwiſe.

The Text ſpeaks of the Nativity, or firſt Original of a Chriſtian, and derives his Deſcent from above, from Heaven, from God, from the Holy Spirit; this is very high; we may look for ſomething extraordinary in ſuch a Birth, which is here called *Regeneration*, or our being Born again, or a ſecond time. This is a great Myſtery, and cannot be underſtood, till it is in ſome meaſure felt. *Regeneration* is not a Notion, but a Nature; not a mere empty Speculation floating in the Brain, but an inward living Principle rooted in the Heart: I am not ſpeaking of things without you, at a diſtance from you, that

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are foreign and extrinſecal to your ſouls, but of that which is eſſential to the Being and Conſtitution of a Chriſtian as ſuch; you are not only my Auditors this day, but each of you the ſubject of my preſent Diſcourſe; I am not only ſpeaking to you, but of you; 'tis what you are, or are not, in the inward ſtate of your ſouls, that I am now enquiring after: By comparing your ſelves with the word, you may know how far you do, or do not, anſwer to the Character that is given there of the New-born ſoul; the eſſential Properties of that Nature in which we live, muſt needs be owned by us, they are in us, they are of us, *bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh*; they are our very ſelves; no ſenſible conſidering man can be without this knowledg of himſelf; he cannot deny his own Image which he ſees with his own Eyes. In a glaſs, face anſwers face; ſo 'tis with the heart of a Man, deſcribe it as it is, in its preſent Actings, Motions, Principles and Inclinations, 'twill fall in with you to a tittle. I would not ſpeak a word, and I hope God will ſo guide me, that I ſhall not utter any thing concerning this new Birth, which falls not under the experience of the weakeſt Chriſtian who is really born of God: If I ſhoot over the heads of o-

thers, 'tis none of my fault, we muſt ſpeak of Divine Things, as they are laid down in the Scriptures, whether we are underſtood, or not underſtood. Preachers do only explain the Object, they cannot enlighten the Faculty; they may open the Text, but they cannot open the Hearts of thoſe that hear them, to underſtand the Scriptures, this is God's work; *Faith cometh by hearing, therefore he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* I cannot beſpeak your Attention by a ſtronger Argument than that in my Text, *Except a man be born again, he cannot,* &c. That which the Word of God ſo plainly puts as a bar to our entrance into the Kingdom of God, we are all concerned to ſee that bar removed, who have any hope of entring into that Kingdom.

Give me leave to reaſon with you out of the Scriptures about this great Point of *Regeneration*: Some place it in that which a mere natural man may pretend unto; paſſing over the whole Myſtery of the Goſpel, they conſtrue the Word of God by Reaſon, bringing down all ſpiritual Expreſſions to the level of Man's Underſtanding: And if no more be intended by them, things are ſtrangely worded in the Bible; 'tis not the manner of men to ſpeak ſo, to cloath their natural Notions with ſuch

Phraſes

Phraſes and Words (peculiar only to the Scriptures) as do not at all ſymbolize with any mere humane conception, and therefore muſt needs ſignifie ſomething higher, ſomething beyond all that ever entred into the heart of a Natural Man; if not, then farewel all Revealed Religion, it ſeems nothing is revealed in Scripture but mere words, Natural Theology is the thing into which all Scripture muſt be interpreted; all the uſe we are to make of the Scriptures, according to them, is only to borrow ſome peculiar words and expreſſions, as ſo many new Terms of Art appropriated to Religion, by Divine Authority: What a ſtrange conceit is this, to borrow from the Scriptures new Bottles to put our old Wine into, our Senſe into Gods word, ſo ſpoiling both; God's Words are too big for our ſenſe, and our ſenſe too low and mean to fill up ſuch high Expreſſions which can never by any rule of ſpeech be brought down and contracted to ſo narrow a ſignification; ſo that whilſt we accommodate the Word of God to our own falſe Conceptions of Divine Things, we underſtand neither God nor our ſelves; we think abſurdly, and ſpeak improperly. But thoſe who underſtand the pure Lauguage of the Goſpel, they ſee a ſuitableneſs between the

Words of the Holy Ghoſt, and the things of the Holy God.

I have read to you out of my Text, the Words of the Holy Ghoſt; 'tis God only, who muſt ſhew both you and me the thing it ſelf intended, and meant by theſe words.

And now to come a little nearer, let me begin with the Context.

John 3. 3. One would have thought the high Opinion *Nicodemus* had of Chriſt, *ver.* 2. *As a teacher come from God, a worker of miracles, and one whom God was with:* And Chriſts earneſtneſs in aſſerting the truth of what he laies down ſo poſitively, *ver.* 3. under a ſolemn Aſſeveration, that it was certainly ſo, ſhould have led *Nicodemus* to the belief of what Chriſt affirmed; but 'tis not the Opinion we have of the Preacher, nor his earneſtneſs in Preaching, nor the certain truth of what he deliverers, will perſwade us to receive this Doctrine of *Regeneration*, till God enlighten our minds, and give us experience of the thing in our ſelves.

Obſerve, *All natural Men have ſtrange, groſs Apprehenſions of the Doctrine of Regeneration. Nicodemus* applies all that Chriſt ſaid, to natural Generation, miſtakes the Myſtery of the new Birth, not comparing

Spiritual

Spiritual things with Spiritual, but with Natural. He cannot riſe higher than a natural Generation, and thinks that muſt be repeated in *Regeneration*; if any ſuch thing be, though never ſo often repeated, 'tis ſtill the ſame thing done the ſame way by entring the ſecond time, *&c. And how can a man be born when he is old?* But, ſuppoſe there were ſuch a thing as a natural *Regeneration* in *Nicodemus*'s Senſe; this would not mend the matter in making us more fit for Heaven, for we ſhould be ſent again into the World, in the ſame corrupt Nature as we had before; whatever is born of the Fleſh, is but Fleſh ſtill, *omne ſimile, generat ſimile*; therefore a natural *Regeneration* ſuppoſes no change, but reproduces a man in the ſame State, Form and Nature, as he had before. If a Man were ten thouſand times Born naturally, he would be the ſame Man ſtill: But the *Regeneration* Chriſt ſpeaks of, makes him a new man; and therefore could not be by entring *a ſecond time into his mothers womb: Nicodemus* knows nothing of any ſuch new Birth, that ſhould bring forth a new Kind, or Race of Men into the World, of a different Genius, Complexion and Principle, from all that are Born of a Woman; but becauſe the Scripture does ſo

plainly ſpeak of ſuch a thing, they who read the Word, dare not deny it altogether; and therefore place the whole Myſtery of it in external Baptiſm; do ſuppoſe it always compleated there of courſe, and will hear no more of it ever after; they count it abſurd to call upon grown baptized Perſons, eſpecially old Men and Women, to labour after a *Regeneration*; that they think is paſt and over long ago, when they were baptized.

Obſerve, *None but a regenerate Perſon underſtands the true nature of Regeneration.* Others can never reach it, becauſe they don't feel it in themſelves; 'tis a perſonal Change wrought in every individual Saint; men may ſee our outward Profeſſion, our outward Walking, our Praying, Hearing, Preaching, our Moral and Religious Practices; but the Principle from which we Act, and by which we are carried out in all theſe things, is infallibly known to none but God, and our own Souls; we may ſearch into our own Hearts ſo far, as to diſcern this new Birth, and we ſhould not reſt till we have found it out.

That we might the better underſtand the Nature of *Regeneration*, let us conſider the ſeveral Names given it in Scripture; *Regeneration*, *Renovation*, *New Creation*, *Converſion*,

Converſion, are Synonimous terms in Scripture, and do all ſignify the ſame thing, do all imply the Corruption of Mans Nature, that produceth nothing but what is like it ſelf; how ſpecious ſoever it may ſeem to be, 'tis but Fleſh; therefore all fleſhly Wiſdom, Beauty and Glory, muſt be mortified and aboliſhed; the Scripture calls for a new Birth, a new Creation after the Image of God, that Man may be enabled to do good, *created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*, Epheſ. 2. 10. Baptiſm is the Sign and Symbol of *Regeneration*, and does imply the thing it ſelf, when the inward Work of the Spirit goes along with the outward waſhing of Water, which it does not always do; this Wind bloweth where it liſteth.

Regeneration is of a larger Extent and Signification than Juſtification and Sanctification; 'tis initially all that belongs to a ſtate of Grace; 'tis fully deſcribed, *Tit.* 3. 5. by waſhing and renewing; there is a double waſhing from Sin.

Firſt, From the guilt of it, *by the blood of Chriſt*, 1 *John* 1. 7. *Rev.* 1. 5. *Rev.* 7. 14. This waſhing is Juſtification, therefore called Bapriſm unto *remiſſion of ſin*, *Mark* 1. 4. *Acts* 2. 38. *Gal.* 3. 27. This is Baptiſm unto Juſtification *by the blood of Chriſt*.

Secondly,

Secondly, From the filth of ſin by the Spirit of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. This is commonly called *Regeneration*, Tit. 3. 5. *Joh.* 3. 4 Born of water, this is baptiſm unto ſanctification, *Rom.* 6. 3,4. *Col.* 2. 12. Theſe two internal Waſhings are always joyned together, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. the one perfect, the other imperfect; Juſtification in nature only precedes Sanctification; and being the Act of God upon us, and towards us, is perfect: but in Sanctification God takes us along with him, we concur in every Act of Sanctification; he works in us to will, and to do; but 'tis we that will and do.

I conceive it lies ſomething wide from the truth, to put (as ſome do) *Regeneration* for *Sanctification*, lying in the mortification of ſin, and newneſs of life, which is rather an effect of *Regeneration*, than that in which it conſiſts; the renewing of our Nature ſuppoſes a union to Chriſt, an ingrafting into him, who is the Root that bears us, communicating all ſpiritual virtue and ſap to thoſe Branches that are vitally joined to him.

Therefore I ſhall deſcribe *Regeneration*, or at large define it thus, *viz.*

'Tis a wonderful work of God, begetting the Elect again unto himſelf, by implanting

ing them into Chriſt, from whom they derive a ſpiritual being, and in whom they live ſpiritually for ever and ever; growing up daily into his likeneſs, till they come to the ſtature of a perfect man in him.

In *Regeneration* there is a ſupernatural form of true holineſs impreſſed upon the Soul, that the preternatural form of ſin and ungodlineſs brought in by the Devil, may be aboliſhed; nothing that is phyſically natural, is aboliſhed by *Regeneration*, which takes not away any natural faculty or affection of the Soul, only ſets them upon right Objects. *Regeneration* produces a new ſpiritual being in the Soul, draws the Image of God upon the heart, ſets the Soul into a holy order and rectitude; when the natural faculties of the rational Soul are brought under the power of ſupernatural Principles, that man is regenerated.

Regeneration implies the beginning of the new Life, or new Creature; birth is the beginning of life; *we are born of God*, *John* 1. 13. This is cauſed by God's quickning of us, *Eph.* 2. 5. in and through our union to Chriſt by faith, who is our life, a quickning Spirit in us, and to us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 45. They who are born of God, are not ſtill-born, but born alive, quickned by the Spirit of Chriſt.

This

This new life appears moſt in the Will, by its real tendency towards God, *Phil.* 2. 13. Where you ſee the will of a man turned to God and Chriſt, you may be confident God hath been at work in that Soul; this great quickning work of *Regeneration* uſually appears firſt in the Will, in the gracious motions and inclinations of the will of man towards God and Chriſt; there may be an illumination of the Mind, without any converſion of the Will; the darkneſs of the Underſtanding is ſooner removed, than the corruption of the Will; there may be many ſtrong convictions wrought, before there be any true converſion of the Will, that ſtands it out to the uttermoſt, before it conſents to come to Chriſt, and caſt the Soul upon him by an act of faith; and when the Father has drawn the Will to that act of faith, repentance is always joined with it, *Acts* 19. 4. *Mark* 1. 15. Faith principally reſpects Chriſt, but Repentance is towards God himſelf, whom we have offended by our ſins, *Acts* 20. 21. therefore Repentance turns us into the Will of God, ſeeks to pleaſe him, by doing only what he approves of, *Works meet for repentance*, Acts 26. 20. Theſe Works are an effect of Goſpel-repentance, that flows from faith in Chriſt.

Legal

Legal Terrors that accompany a legal Repentance, are before Faith, and cannot be removed but by faith in Chriſt Jeſus; an unregenerate man may attain to a Legal-repentance, and be much terrified; but he cannot attain to a Goſpel-repentance, in turning from ſin as contrary to God's holineſs. Indeed this Goſpel-repentance that flows from Faith, may be ſooner perceived than Faith it ſelf; a Sinner cannot eaſily perſwade himſelf that he is reconciled to God in Chriſt, before he finds in himſelf that he hath left thoſe ſins that ſeparated him from God. *Regeneration* lies in creatiug in us a habit and vital principle of Faith, which diſpoſes and inclines us to actual believing; this very principle denominates a man a Believer in the ſight of God, before he actually believes; ſo regenerate Infants may be ſaid to be Believers.

In *Regeneration* there is a power put into a man to believe and repent, which are acts of the new Creature; ſo that a man muſt firſt be a new Creature; and that which makes him ſo, is *Regeneration*; before that, an unregenerate perſon is called an old man, the old man is diſtinct from our ſelves as men; we muſt diſtinguiſh between the corruption of humane Nature, and humane Nature

Nature it ſelf, which *Regeneration* does not deſtroy, but perfect; it implies a change of ſtate, and a change of nature, the foundation of both is laid in our *Regeneration*, by virtue of our incorporation into Chriſt, *who of God is made unto us righteouſneſs and ſanctification*; the efficacy of his Blood and Spirit does reach our Souls, being one with him; we die with him, and riſe with him, are diſcharged from ſin upon the account of his Satisfaction, and are raiſed up unto newneſs of life by vertue of his Reſurrection.

We paſs through all the ſtates that Chriſt paſſed through; we die with him, are crucified with him; we riſe with him, aſcend into Heaven with him, are glorified with him; there is nothing that God requires of Believers in a way of faith and hope, but he hath given ſome inſtance already in his Son Jeſus Chriſt of the actual accompliſhment of that thing. We hope to be juſtified from our ſins, becauſe Chriſt is juſtified from 'em; they were laid upon him, but he has freed himſelf now from the imputation of them; and therefore will *appear the ſecond time without ſin*, Heb. 9. 28. We hope for a reſurrection of the Body, becauſe Chriſt is riſen; we hope for glory, becauſe Chriſt is aſcended and glo-

rified:

rified: So the Apoſtle argues, 1 *Pet.* 1. 21. *Who by him do believe in God that raiſed him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.* There is as much reaſon for the juſtification of a ſinner believing in Chriſt, as for the Juſtification of the Perſon of Chriſt himſelf; it is upon the ſame account; ſo that our caſe is an adjudged caſe, already upon record in Heaven; it is no new thing for God to paſs by our ſins, he having paſſed them all by in Chriſt; no new thing for God to juſtifie ſuch ſinners as we are, having already juſtified Chriſt, admitted him to Glory, and ſet him down at his Right Hand: Theſe are all inſtances of what you may expect from God the Father: The Covenant of Grace requires no other Righteouſneſs for your Juſtification, but that of Chriſt; therefore I would perſwade you to keep up a high value and eſteem for the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt; it will ſupport you under the greatneſs of your own ſins, and under all the defects of your own Righteouſneſs: What is it that troubles poor ſouls? their ſins are great, and their Righteouſneſs ſmall, and what will become of them they know not. Set the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt againſt the greatneſs of your ſins, and againſt

gainſt all the Imperfections of your own Righteouſneſs, raiſe up your thoughts in a high eſteem of this Righteouſneſs of Chriſt. I would not have you ſay, as too too many do, and may be they mean no more than they ſay, if ſo, they do not ſay all the truth; how many real Believers have I heard ſay, Chriſt will cover the Imperfection of our own Righteouſneſs, and ſo think they ſpeak all the truth; but they muſt mean ſomething beyond all this, or they do not ſpeak right; for the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt apprehended by Faith, does not only cover all the Defects of your own Righteouſneſs, but covers your very Righteouſneſs it ſelf, which muſt never be brought in as an Argument, why God ſhould juſtify; you muſt not be found in your own Righteouſneſs; *not having my own Righteouſneſs*, ſays *Paul*, *Phil.* 3. 9. that is, not having it on; Faith in Chriſt does ſtrip a Man of his own Righteouſneſs, does not only ſpeak comfortably, as to the Pardon of all the Defects of our own Righteouſneſs; but take it in its beſt State, and higheſt Degree, as far as our Righteouſneſs can reach, it muſt be covered when we come to God for Juſtification. There are two Seaſons when Chriſt preſents us to the Father, the one for Juſtification, the other

other for Glorification; when he does the firſt, he preſents us ſinners lying in our blood, as having no righteouſneſs of our own, but what is imputed to us by God; and then for Glorification, he preſents us perfectly Holy, inherently Holy, without any ſpot or blemiſh upon us; and this he doth with exceeding great joy: ſo that when you would make uſe of Chriſt for Juſtification, remember to cover all your own righteouſneſs, and put it quite off, as to any truſt or confidence in it; 'tis hard to do Righteouſneſs, and not to be proud of it, conceiving we merit ſomething by it; you muſt be workers of Righteouſneſs, but not wearers of your own Righteouſneſs: when you ſtand before God for Juſtification, take heed of having it, or being found in it. Nothing can make a man ſee the weakneſs and inſufficiency of his own performances, but a true principle of Faith, that humbles him, and empties him, ſending him ſtript and naked unto Chriſt, to cover him with the unſpotted Robe of his perfect Righteouſneſs.

Laſtly, The immediate effect of *Regeneration* is Adoption: You ſee I have been comparing *Regeneration* with other great Goſpel Truths, that I might find out the proper place for it, and ſee what relation

it ſtands in to all the other parts and members of the body of Divinity.

I ſay therefore, the immediate effect of *Regeneration* is Adoption; being born of Man, we became the Children of Men; ſo being born of God, we become the Children of God: *Adoption* and *Birth* go together here; he that begets, adopts thoſe whom he hath begotten; 'tis not ſo among men, for this is another peculiar property of *Regeneration*: They who have power to become the Children of God, they are born of God; adopted, and yet born; born, and yet adopted; ſo that it pleaſeth God the Father, by all the ways of Nature, of Art, of civil Cuſtom among men, to ſet forth his Love by a natural generation, or being born. 'Tis a natural thing among men to be born, but adoption is a civil inſtituted thing, a thing of prudence and cuſtom among men, it is brought in by Man: You know how fond men are of thoſe they have Adopted; 'tis next to the natural affection they bear to the Children of their own bodies; ſo that no doubt there is much of myſtery in this Doctrine of *Regeneration*. There is not a Man in the World almoſt, but lives in ſome hope of going to Heaven when he dies; yet the greateſt part of mankind carry themſelves

ſelves ſo, as if they would only make the World believe they ſhall be ſaved, not as if they were under any real hope, or expectation of ſuch a thing, nothing of this appears by any ſerious preparation they make for Heaven or Glory: But let their hopes be what they will, *except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.* Thus much in general. I ſhall now come to particulars, and caſt all I have further to ſay upon this Text, under theſe following Heads: *viz.*

1. *The Author of* Regeneration.
2. *The Subjects of* Regeneration.
3. *The Means of* Regeneration.
4. *The Manner of* Regeneration, *how it is wrought and carried on in the Soul.*
5. *The Time of* Regeneration.
6. *The End of* Regeneration.
7. *The Scripture-marks and ſigns of* Regeneration.
8. *The Application of the whole.*

1. *The Author of* Regeneration: *viz.* God. 1 *Joh.* 5. 18. We are ſaid to be begotten of God, born of God; and this is ſometimes aſcribed to the Father, ſometimes to God the Son, ſometimes to God the Holy Ghoſt; all that is called God, is

concerned in Man's *Regeneration.* God the Father is ſaid to beget us, 1 Pet. 1. 3. We are ſaid to be *Created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*, Eph. 2. 10. To be *in him*, even *in his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Joh. 5. 20. to be *born of the ſpirit*, Joh. 3. 5. *All the perſons of the Trinity have a joint agency in this work of our* Regeneration, *&c. Page* 1. And great is the efficacy of Three ſuch concurring, total Cauſes of the ſame kind; this is above all our Logick and Philoſophy, which own no ſuch Cauſes. God *is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working*, Iſa. 28. 29. We are in his hands, *as clay in the hand of the potter*, Jer. 18 6. He can make us Veſſels of Honour if he pleaſe; and this Honour have all his Saints, his excellent ones, in whom he delights. The moving Cauſe is God's meer Good Will and Pleaſure. *James* 1. 18. *His abundant mercy and loving kindneſs*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. Tit. 3. 4, 5. Epheſ. 2. 4. 5. We ſhould be much affected with the Love of God in our *Regeneration:* God ſtands in the relation of a Father to all who are begotten by him.

1. He is the Father of Chriſt, the Second perſon in the Trinity, *Pſal.* 2. 7. whoſe Generation is Eternal, *who can declare it? Iſa.* 53. 8. It is the profound object of our Faith, grounded upon Divine Revelation. 2. He

2. He is the Father of all true Chriſtians, who are ſpiritually born of his Will, at the time appointed of the Father for their effectual Calling. 'Tis termed a Calling, becauſe they are begotten by the Word of God, ſpeaking to their hearts by it, and ſo turning them to himſelf: God is the Father of Chriſt, and the Father of Believers. *John* 20. 17. *My father, and your father.* Upon theſe accounts it is, that God glories ſo much in his own Paternity; not only in relation to Chriſt, his Eternal Son, who is God equal with the Father; but alſo in relation to the Saints, who are his true-born Children through Chriſt. See an inſtance of both:

1. In reference to Chriſt; *Heb.* 1. 5. *Thou art my ſon, this day have I begotten thee. Let all the Angels of God worſhip him; thy throne is for ever and ever. Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool.* So Pſal. 2. 6, 7, 8. Thus was this great Man, this Son of God, incarnate, brought into Heaven in ſtate and triumph, at his Reſurrection.

2. In reference to the Saints; Jer. 31. 9. *I am a father to Iſrael, and Ephraim is my firſt-born.* So 2 Cor. 6. 18. *I will be a father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.* Tho

God does greatly delight in his beloved Son, loves to ſee the brightneſs of his own glory ſhining out in Chriſt the expreſs Image of his Perſon; yet next to his own Image in Chriſt, he loves to behold the Image of his Son in the Saints, and therefore has predeſtinated them to be conformable to the Image of his Son, *Rom.* 8. 29. Chriſt indeed is the firſt-born, but many Brethren are to follow (*Rom.* 8. 29.) to be *added to the Lord*, as the Phraſe is, *Acts* 5. 14. God loves to ſee the number of his Children encreaſing; to ſee his Family enlarged. Under this conſideration *Paul* bows his Knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named, *Epheſ.* 3. 14, 15. With what reverence doth *Paul* draw nigh to this great Father? I told you but now, that God glories in Chriſt his firſt begotten Son; you heard in what triumph the great Man, Jeſus Chriſt, was brought into Heaven, how God welcomed him to Glory; ſo there is joy in Heaven at the *Regeneration* of a Sinner; Angels rejoyce, God rejoyces. This day have I begotten ſuch and ſuch; Oh that there might be Joy in Heaven upon this account, this day, that it might be noted down above, that this and that Man were born here.

I will

I will ſhew you the ground of this glorying, of this great ſatisfaction that God hath in his Children: Tho Chriſt be anointed above his fellows, yet there is a great meaſure of anointing poured out upon the Saints; the fulneſs of the Godhead is in none but Chriſt, yet the fulneſs of God is in all the Saints, *Epheſ.* 3. 19. they are not ſhut out from any of the communicable Attributes of God, but have their ſhare of all that is in him, according to their capacities as creatures: Caſt an empty Barrel into the Sea, all the Sea is not in the Barrel, but the Barrel is in all the Sea; the Sea runs under it, over it, on every ſide of it: Thus are we ſwallowed up in God. He comprehends us, tho we cannot fully comprehend him; we are in Chriſt according to his infinite capacity, and therefore are perfectly juſtified by the infinite merit of his perfect Righteouſneſs imputed to us: But Chriſt is in us, according to our finite, weak capacities, and therefore we are but imperfectly ſanctified; we have what we are able to receive, and no more at preſent, till our hearts are farther inlarged.

Thus you ſee what it is to be a Child of God; how the fulneſs of God is beſtowed upon us. God glories in this. And have

not the Saints reaſon to glory in it alſo? But alas, how do Men pleaſe themſelves with their Rich Relations, Great Families, they are Nobly deſcended? But I muſt tell you, all Nations are of one Blood, and that is tainted too, we are a Seed of evil-doers, there is no Noble blood runs in your veins, till you are born of God; 'tis *Regeneration* only that makes you the Sons and Daughters of the Moſt High; then you are high born indeed.

To ſtir you up to a holy ambition after this new birth, do but conſider the Father of the Family, the great God of Heaven and Earth, bleſſed for ever, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort.

Conſider Chriſt the Elder Brother of the Family, *Rom.* 9. 5. He *is over all, God bleſſed for ever.* His Name is *Wonderful, Counſellor, the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace,* Iſa. 9. 6, 7. You ſee how the Dignity and Majeſty of his Perſon is deſcribed.

3. Conſider the many priviledges that are intailed upon new-born Souls, Heirs of God, joynt heirs with Chriſt; you are born to nothing but woe and miſery, till you are born again. How ſhould we long to be related to ſuch a Father, to ſuch a Brother, to ſuch an Inheritance?

I in-

I inſiſt the more upon this, becauſe I am perſwaded, diſcourſes of your Heavenly Father muſt needs be very pleaſing to you who are his Children, whom ſhould Children hear of with more delight, than of their Father that begat them? Be not caſt down at any thing that offends you here below, you have a Father in Heaven who takes care of you, numbers the hairs of your heads, will intereſt himſelf in your ſmalleſt concerns, and ſee that all things ſhall work together for good to you.

We may notionally, and according to the Letter, ſpeak what we read and hear of *Regeneration*, and be little affected; but when once the New Nature begins to ſtir, when a Spirit of Adoption begins to breathe in us, 'twill carry us out by a ſecret inſtinct to God as to a Father; Nature works powerfully; we ſay, Love deſcends more ſtrongly than it aſcends; ſo 'tis here, God loves his Children better than they can love him; this is love, not that we love God, tho there is a great ſtrength in the natural Affection of ingenuous Children towards their Parents.

The truth is, nothing does more enoble our Minds, raiſe our ſpirits to a true Chriſtian Magnanimity; nothing does more uphold and encourage us in our way, more ſtrengthen

ſtrengthen our Faith and Hope in Prayer, than lively Apprehenſions of God, as our Father in Chriſt Jeſus; ſee how Chriſt hangs upon this word [*Father*] in his Prayer, *John* 17. *Father, Father; Oh Father; Holy Father; Oh Righteous Father*; we ſhould eye nothing more in Prayer, than our Relation to God as a Father: How can an unregenerate man ſay, *Our Father which art in Heaven?* Alas! thou haſt never a Father in Heaven, thou art a Child of Wrath, a Child of the Devil: Though ſome unregenerate Perſons may be within the Election of God, yet the Scripture ſpeaks of them according to their preſent ſtate, calls them Aliens, Strangers, Foreigners: Could we conceive aright of our Covenant-relation to God, and keep our thoughts working upon it, it would afford an Argument to us, where all other Arguments fail; as Iſa. 63. 16. *Doubtleſs thou art our Father*; it cannot be that our Heavenly Father ſhould forget us; a Mother may forget her Child,—— *but the Lord is gracious and full of Compaſſion*, Pſal. 145. 8. There is a greater fulneſs of Compaſſion in our Heavenly Father, than in our Natural Parents; they can do, and will do, what God cannot do, becauſe he will not: Since the Priviledges of the Chil-

Children of God are ſo great, how ſhould we long to be born again! to be *born of ſpirit*, Joh. 3. 6. To be *a new lump*, 1 Cor. 5. 7. *New creatures*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. To have *Chriſt formed in us*, Gal. 4. 19. To be *quickned*, Epheſ. 2. 1. *Baptized with the Holy Ghoſt*, Mat. 3. 11. To be *renewed in the ſpirit of our mind*, Epheſ. 4. 23. Theſe are Scripture-expreſſions of a great depth, of a high ſignification, which if well ſtudied and pondered in our hearts, ſeriouſly and often prayed over, will give us more light into the Myſtery of Regeneration, than the tongue of Men and Angels can utter; none can open theſe Scriptures to you but the Holy Ghoſt; tho Miniſters cannot bring down theſe Scripture expreſſions to man's Underſtanding, yet the Spirit of God can lift up man's Underſtanding to ſome diſcerning of the mind of Chriſt in them, by ſhining in our hearts the light of the Knowledg of the Glory of God in the face of Chriſt. We ſee how much Glory and Honour is derived to us by God's being the Author of our *Regeneration*. I will now look a little further into this Myſtery.

Regeneration is our paſſing over into Chriſt, into his Life, Nature, and Spirit; they who are thus joined to the Lord, are one

one Spirit. Chriſt is their Life; being united to Life it ſelf, they muſt needs be quickned by it; it is preſent death to be ſeparated from Life it ſelf; in *Regeneration* Life doth not ſo much enter into us, as we into it; and being once born of God, we gradually enter further and further into his Life, till all Mortality be ſwallowed up of it. Thus Grace reigns through Righteouſneſs unto Eternal Life, and this Eternal Life is God; there is but one Eternal Life; when we are in him that is true, in him that is Eternal, *this is life eternal*, John 5. 20. Therefore to be in Chriſt, and to be a New Creature, is all one. All Creatures that have breath, live, move, and have their Being in God, yet they are not ſo in God, as the New Creature is in Chriſt: God, as a Creator, beſtows a Creature-life upon man, diſtinct from his own Eternal Uncreated Life; and man having this natural root of his own, from the God of Nature, grows up by himſelf, with all the ſpecifical Properties belonging to his kind, whereby he is diſtinguiſhed from his fellow-creatures, he ſtands forth at ſome diſtance from God, yet under the general influence of his Providence, without which no creature can ſubſiſt: But in *Regeneration* God does not only breathe the breath of

life

life into us, making us living ſouls, but breathes his own quickning Spirit into us, that we may live the very life of God in our meaſure; 'tis one thing for God to give forth ſomething virtually from himſelf, as he does in our firſt Creation; another thing to give himſelf really unto us, as in the ſecond Creation. God as a Redeemer, raiſes up a new Creature in himſelf, partaker of his own Divine Nature, Life and Spirit; this *life is hid with Chriſt in God*, Col. 3. 3. and cannot in the Root and Principle of it be diſtinguiſhed from God himſelf; Chriſt is our Life, which according to our finite capacity as Creatures we partake of; the new Creature is but a Creature for all this, though quite of another make, conſtitution, and original, from all the firſt Creation, and therefore called a new Creature, ſtanding in a nearer union and conjunction to God, ſo born of him as no other creature is; all Creatures are made by him, none born of him but the new Creature; as Chriſt took part of our Fleſh and Blood in his Incarnation, ſo we partake of his Divine Nature in our *Regeneration*; as the ſoul is the life of the body, ſo the ſpirit of Chriſt dwelling in us, is the life of our ſouls, acting them in a ſupernatural way; we live the life of God, which

which we were eſtranged from, knew nothing of in our unregenerate ſtate; 'tis not we that live, but Chriſt living in us, *Gal.* 2. 20. *Becauſe I live, you ſhall live alſo*, John 14. 19. *Chriſt in us the hope of glory*, Col. 1. 27. Till Chriſt be formed in us, we cannot be ſaid to be born of God; a ſpirit of life muſt firſt enter into us from Chriſt; and how does this ſpirit enter? Not as a ſeparate Principle from Chriſt, but in and with Chriſt Jeſus; *the ſpirit of life in Chriſt hath made me free from the law of ſin and death*, Rom. 8. 2. Have a care of leading a ſeparate life from Chriſt, in the ſtrength of your own Graces, for they are but ſtreams iſſuing from the Fountain of Life in Chriſt Jeſus, and will quickly dry up, if not continually fed by the Fountain: Branches cannot bear fruit, if they abide not in the root; as the life of the branches is in the root of the tree, ſo our life as new creatures is radicated in Chriſt; he is the root that bears us under all our deadneſs and dulneſs; we ſhould go to Chriſt for freſh quicknings; many times we ſeek for life in our ſelves, and can feel none; but if we would ſeek for it in Chriſt, and come up cloſer to him, how reviving would that be? *animus cum ſole redit*; ſo get but under this Sun of Righteouſneſs, you'l quickly find

find healing; your ſpirits will return, your cold frozen hearts will grow warm, the fire will burn within ere you are aware; what is a ſtate of death, but a ſtate of alienation from Chriſt, who is *our life*? Eph. 4. 18. Put him on then, and wear him next your hearts, let him but ſtretch himſelf all over your dark dead ſouls, as the Prophet did over the dead child, 1 *Kings* 17. 21. 2 *Kings* 4. 34, 35. and life will return, you'l find a ſudden Reſurrection, a freſh vigor of ſpirit will ſuddenly come upon you; if ever you would be quickned, it muſt be by Chriſt, and with Chriſt, *who hath quickened us together with Chriſt*, Eph. 2. 5. What do you alone without Chriſt? No wonder you are in a dead frame, while you are muſing upon what you are in your ſelves, while you are in this ſolitary condition, wandring up and down without Chriſt; let Chriſt and you come once together, and there will be life, there will be ſtrength, there will be another Spirit in you.

If God be the Author of *Regeneration*, let not the Eunuch ſay, *I am a dry tree*; all things are poſſible with God, who can raiſe up children to *Abraham* of ſtones. I would have none deſpair of becoming the Children of God, who do ſincerely deſire it,

it, and long for that day. New Births are ſudden things. I am perſwaded they will be ſo towards the end of the world, when a Nation ſhall be born in a day, and ſinners be converted by thouſands, as in the Apoſtles time. Now we travel in birth a great while with one and another; many pangs, many throws, yet they ſtick in the place of bringing forth; we propheſie over dry bones, but no ratling, no coming together, no ſpirit of life yet entring into them, they ſtick in the place of bringing forth; how many hearers are there in our Congregations who are ſtuck between Chriſt and the World, can get neither backwards nor forwards, are now where they were many years ago? They dare not caſt off Religion altogether, neither dare they come up to the power of it; they come and go to and from the place of the Holy One, converſing only with the dead Letter of the Goſpel, are not yet brought under the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit; 'tis the Spirit gives life, by bringing in Goſpel Truths in their natural living Principle into the Heart; then we live, and the Word lives in us; the heart and the Word are quickned together; one was in a dead frame, the other lay in a dead Letter before, but now both do live together, and agree with each other;

other; the ſenſe of the Soul, is the ſenſe of the Word; and the Senſe of the Word, is the ſenſe of the Soul; they both mean the ſame thing, they fall in with each other; they dwell together in Wiſdom and Spiritual Underſtanding; there is but one Spirit between them; what one ſays, the other does; and this is the great work of God as he is the Author of *Regeneration*, to make our hearts thus to agree with his Word, by caſting them into the mould of the Goſpel. If ever the Word be ingrafted upon the Soul, it muſt be ingrafted upon a living Principle of Holineſs that ſuits with it, for nothing elſe can receive it, or hold it, and this is the Work of God upon the Soul in *Regeneration*.

CHAP. II.

Subjects of Regeneration.

II. THE Subjects of *Regeneration*, who they are, *viz.* The Elect, only the Elect, and all the Elect, *Rom.* 8. 30. *Whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called*, &c. Let their outward Circumſtances be what they will, whether bond or free, male or female, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. *Gal.* 6 15. *Regeneration* will reach them all firſt or laſt. I prove it thus:

It muſt be either by Gods Election, or by Man's Election, putting himſelf by

his own free-will into this ſtate; or by Accident, no body knows how. I will prove it muſt be one of theſe three ways, becauſe 'tis apparent, that all by Nature are born in an unregenerate ſtate, and that the Devil does carry away the greateſt part of mankind into Hell in their unregenerate ſtate. Theſe Truths are plainly laid down in Scripture, and are capable of clear demonſtration from thence. Since neither of them need any proof, I'le take them both for granted, and I argue thus from them: If all are born in ſin, and the greateſt part by far, dye in their ſins, Who makes the difference, and from whence does it ariſe? It muſt come either from the Eternal Purpoſe of God electing ſome and not others, or from man's own choice electing himſelf, and putting himſelf into this ſtate, by the power of his own free-will, ſo that he is regenerate becauſe he will be ſo; he will regenerate himſelf, and change his own nature, and make himſelf a new creature. The abſurdity of this will appear by and by: or elſe it is by an unaccountable Contingency, no body knows how, or why. It cannot be by the two latter ways, *Ergo*, by the Firſt, *viz.* Gods Election.

1. It cannot be by man's own free-will; for it can't be ſuppoſed that corrupt nature ſhould

ſhould ever will its own deſtruction; the fleſh is not ſo divided againſt it ſelf; Satan will not caſt out Satan; the Devil is more at Unity with himſelf than ſo; he would indeed ſet himſelf above God, and dethrone him if poſſible; as he is, he would be a God, he would have the uſe of God's Power, that he might abuſe it, and play the Devil the more, ſo far he would be like unto the moſt High; but he is ſo much a Devil, ſuch an irreconcilable enemy to all Godlineſs, that he would not exchange his Deviliſh Nature, for the Holy Nature of God; and ſo are all the Children of the Devil, *Acts* 13. 10. *Oh thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteouſneſs.* A natural man would be nothing but what he is; he likes himſelf too well to part with his own nature; 'tis unreaſonable to imagine ſuch a ſelf-deſtroying inclination in any creature whatſoever; 'tis impoſſible for any nature to will a change of it ſelf. A Principle of ſelf-preſervation runs through the whole Creation of God; the Toad, as full of Poyſon as it is, would be a Toad ſtill; ſo ſinful man is as tender of himſelf, as much in love with himſelf, as the Holieſt Angel in Heaven is with himſelf. Whence ſhould ſuch an actual Will ariſe in man, as to deſire his own Annihilation,

that he may ceaſe to be what he is, and become a new Creature? There muſt be another Nature put into him before he can deſire to be another Man; all do follow the courſe of Nature, and cannot do otherwiſe; therefore till nature is changed, the courſe is and muſt be the ſame as ever it was; good inclinations are never found in depraved nature; an *evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit; figs grow not upon thiſtles, nor grapes upon thorns.* To ſuppoſe a man in a ſtate of nature to will his own Converſion, is to ſuppoſe him already converted: if the Will be changed, the Man is changed; the Will is the Man. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots?* Jer. 13. 23. they may as ſoon do this, as one born in ſin can ceaſe to live in ſin; we muſt be born again firſt, for a ſinful nature will never carry a man out to a holy Life. Nature is a conſtant fixed Principle, always keeping within its own ſphere; 'tis not a mutable fancy, that may be taken up, or laid down at pleaſure. We ſee all things keep their own ſhape and form; and 'twould be monſtrous, were it otherwiſe. The whole Creation would be confounded, if things could run one into another, and Metamorphiſe themſelves into what different ſpecies they

pleaſe;

pleaſe; the God of Nature has fixed things otherwiſe; and I am ſure none but the God of Grace can alter the corrupt nature of fallen man.

It cannot be by chance, by a fortuitous concourſe of I know not what. None but a downright Atheiſt will reſolve it into this; 'tis ſuch a denial of Providence in the chiefeſt deſign and contrivance of the Infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, as no Chriſtian ever can bear. What is Regenerating Grace, but a ſpecial Providence towards the Elect, carried on with wonderful Wiſdom and Counſel? Where known cauſes, and ſpecial ends may be aſſigned, there is no room for Chance; we may ſteadily look from the beginning to the end of ſuch a production, and trace back the effect ſtep by ſtep, to its firſt original cauſe. He that is a Chriſtian by chance, not knowing how or why he came to be ſo, will give but a ſorry account of his Faith, and may as ſuddenly, with more reaſon, turn Infidel again.

Therefore ſince *Regeneration* does not happen by an unaccountable Contingency, nor can ever be brought about by any mere humane contrivance, what remains, but that we aſcribe it, as the Scripture does, to the Divine Will of him, *to*

whom all things are possible; beginning at the Eternal Purpose of God in Election, so proceeding downwards through all the methods, ways, and means appointed by God for the carrying on this great work of his in the hearts of men?

The truth is, the first breaking forth of Electing Love upon us, is in our *Regeneration*; 'till something of it appears, we cannot know any thing by all that is before us, of God's Eternal Love to us: Our actual taking any thing up into our hands, argues a previous choice, that our eye was upon it before. So here, God has from Eternity made choise of some for Salvation, his Eye was upon them from Eternity; and when his Grace takes actual hold of them, we may then, through our present effectual Vocation, see up to our Eternal Election, and by these visible streams, go back to the invisible Fountain of Free-grace in the heart of our Heavenly Father: By what he does in time, we know what he intended from Eternity.

Let none despair of this Grace, who wait upon God for it; all those who have already passed the streights of the new-birth, were once under as discouraging circumstances as any now can be; but God had mercy on them, and so he may

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on thee; he breathed the breath of Spiritual life into them, and ſo he can and may into thee; he is a God that raiſes the dead, dead Souls as well as dead Bodies. We may ſee in the eye-lids of ſome, the very *ſhadow of Eternal death*; but God can turn that *ſhadow* into the *morning*, and cauſe the *day-ſpring from on high to viſit them.* Election alters no Man's ſtate, till it iſſue in Converſion; then you may ſee your names written in the *Book of Life*, from a ſence and feeling of that life in your ſelves to which you were fore-ordained. 'Till we are regenerated, we cannot tell whether ever we ſhall be; God knows, but we do not: The Election ſhall obtain, *Rom.* 11. 7. Therefore all that have obtained, muſt aſcribe it to Election, *That the purpoſe of God might ſtand according to election*, Rom. 9. 11.

The cauſe of this great change that *Regeneration* makes, muſt be reſolved either into the Will of God, or Will of the Creature; there is no medium between God and the Creature; whatever is done, is by one or the other. Some reſolve Converſion and *Regeneration* into Man's own power, derived from that general ſufficient Grace purchaſed by Chriſt for all men: But if man in his perfect

ſtate fell under that general ſufficient Grace which he was certainly endowed with at his firſt Creation, How can we now ſuppoſe any ſuch general grace to be ſufficient to recover fallen Man, and to keep him for ever from a relapſe? Therefore we muſt place fallen Man under ſome ſtronger influence, even that of Effectual Grace, which does not only ſhew unto Man the way of Salvation by Chriſt, but effectually draws his heart to an actual cloſure with Chriſt, joyning him to the Lord in one ſpirit. This Effectual Grace in ſaving ſome, does no injury to others; they periſh juſtly from the demerits of their own ſins; theſe are ſaved freely through the merits of Chriſt. Let us not be too curious in enquiring why God ſaves one and not another; there is a covering upon the face of this great deep. *The ways of God are unſearchable, and his judgments paſt our finding out*; all muſt be reſolved into the Soveraign Will of God: Why ſhould our eye be evil becauſe his is good, who does what he will with his own, and gives no account of his matters? Becauſe God has purpoſed from Eternity to ſhew mercy to ſome, not telling us who, let every own ſtudy his own Salvation, and put in for his ſhare of this Free Grace,

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which is offered to all, intended for ſome; and why not for thee? Thoſe who embrace the Promiſe, and believe in Jeſus, will never find any Decree in Heaven againſt them hindering their Salvation; and thoſe who refuſe the Promiſes, will not come to Chriſt when called, ſhall never be ſaved by virtue of any mere Decree.

Faith and Repentance are as much under the decree of God, as Salvation it ſelf; if the Decree of God bring not forth ſuch things in you now as accompany Salvation, 'twill never bring forth Salvation it ſelf. The Doctrine of Election is a comfortable Doctrine, if we apply it to the Means as well as to the End: They who deny this Doctrine, and plead ſo much for Man's Free-will, they do, and muſt hold a falling from Grace; tho God loves them now, they are not ſure to continue in his love, nor never will be, 'till they run up all their hopes into Electing Love. When once they ſee that God has loved them from everlaſting, which they may do, by reſolving all the preſent fruits of the ſpirit into election, as the Scripture teaches us; they can ſtrongly argue from the unchangeableneſs of God, That he who has loved them from everlaſting, will love them to everlaſting; for whom he ſo loves, he always loves to the end. Let

Let me make ſome uſe of this Point; there may be ſome difficulties in it, but I hope God will clear them up to your Souls.

If the Subjects of *Regeneration* be the Elect, only the Elect, and all the Elect; Then prove your Election by your *Regeneration*; you cannot prove *Regeneration* by your Election; for bare Election, if you know it, alters no Man's ſtate. Many of the elect of God lie long in an unregenerate ſtate: Election is never in Scripture brought in as a proof of Grace in us; but Grace in us is brought in as a proof of our Election.

To prevent miſtakes in ſome convinced, tho yet unconverted ſinners, ay, and in ſome weak trembling Believers too, whoſe convictions of ſin do put them into no ſmall fright: When I ſay *Regeneration* is a good proof of your Election, let not any ſay, Then my unregenerate ſtate is as good a proof of my Reprobation; it does by no means follow, for theſe Reaſons.

1*ſt*. Becauſe an unregenerate ſtate, or a ſtate of ſin and unregeneracy, has not that dependance upon, or relation to eternal Reprobation, as *Regeneration*, or a ſtate of Grace has to our eternal Election. A ſtate

ſtate of Grace flows from eternal Election; but a ſtate of ſin and unregeneracy does not flow from eternal Reprobation, but from the fall of *Adam*, God permitting it as a means through which his electing love would effectually work for the more glorious reſtauration of Man. They who are regenerated, are elected, *Rom.* 8. 29, 30. but thoſe who are not yet regenerated, cannot be ſaid to be not elected or reprobated.

2*dly*, A ſtate of ſin and unregeneracy is common to all, both elect and reprobates; but a ſtate of *Regeneration* peculiar only to the Elect. We are all born in ſin, all by nature the Children of wrath; all the Saints here on Earth, and all the Saints now in Glory above, were once in an unregenerate ſtate.

3*dly*, An unregenerate ſtate is alterable; we may paſs out of it into a better ſtate; but a ſtate of Grace is unalterable. We may riſe up out of a ſtate of ſin, but we cannot fall out of a ſtate of Grace; we may, even in a ſtate of Grace, fall into many particular ſins, out of which God will recover us by repentance; but we can never fall quite out of it into Hell.

The Decrees of God are unalterable, and ſo is a ſtate of Grace flowing directly from

from thence; but a ſtate of ſin and unbelief is alterable. I ſpeak this to the ſupport and comfort of all convinced ſinners, that none may ſink into utter deſpair; becauſe there is yet hope concerning them.

The Scripture does not put us upon proofs of Reprobation, but Election. We are commanded to make that ſure. 'Tis true, final Unbelief and Deſpair are the certain conſequent of Reprobation; but we muſt ſtay till the end come, we can poſitively determine nothing till then; God calls ſome at one hour, and ſome at another hour; till the day of Grace be quite ſpent, and the laſt minute of the laſt hour quite run out. We can conclude nothing of any Man's Reprobation.

Jude 4. There are certain Men ordained of old to condemnation, I do not doubt of it: God may, and doth ſome-
Heb. 3.18. time *ſwear* againſt ſuch and ſuch, totally withdrawing for ever from them; and yet 'tis hard for any man to know this of himſelf, or any other; for we ſee ſome who, in their own judgments, have been left to a total, final deſpair, have yet been recovered; thoſe who, in their own and others apprehenſions, have been under invincible hardneſs and unbelief of heart,

yet

yet that alſo has been overcome, and they brought to a better frame and temper. *Secret things belong to God:* Let us not be too raſh in this matter; 'tis enough for a terrified ſinner to know the badneſs of his preſent ſtate; ſhould he know more, 'twould quite overwhelm him, he would be fit for nothing but Hell. God hides this uſually from the wicked'ſt men upon earth, to ſee how they will carry it under the means of Grace, that they may be the more inexcuſable at laſt, who lived ſo long in the view of their danger, and of the only way of eſcape by Chriſt, and would not come unto him for Life.

The beſt way to know your Intereſt in the decree of Election, is to ſtudy your preſent ſtate well.

You'll ſay, What are we to underſtand by the preſent ſtate of our Souls? And how ſhall we know what that is?

Anſw. The preſent ſtate of our Souls, lies in the relation we ſtand in, either to Heaven or Hell; in that capacity we are in, for eternal Salvation, or eternal Damnation, if we ſhould dye this Inſtant. To know this aright, we muſt conſider how God has ſtated it; every Man's preſent ſtate is ſtated by God in the Word: mark well what his declared judgment is of ſuch

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as we are, who live as we live, do as we do, think as we think.—I ſtand not much upon the judgment of a Man, concerning his everlaſting ſtate, unleſs it fall in with the judgment of God in the Scriptures; many will judge themſelves, as their fears or hopes do lead them, without any reference at all to the Word of God. We that are Miniſters muſt join with the Word, whether it be for you or againſt you. If you come not up to the terms of the Covenant, you are caſt by the Word, we ſhall quickly underſtand your Caſe; but if you'l make new terms for your ſelves, and ſay, If I have not ſuch gifts, ſuch degrees of Grace, ſuch enlargements and ſenſible comforts; if I ſtill remain under ſuch temptations, ſuch afflictions, I will never believe I am a Child of God; you may ſay and believe what you pleaſe, but I know no Word of God, from one end of the *Bible* to the other that ſays as you ſay. There is no end of theſe Objections, you'l be ſure to hold to your Opinion, you give ſo much credit to your ſelf, and ſo little to the Word in that caſe, that all we ſay from thence, in anſwer to your doubts, ſignifies nothing; whereas if you grounded your ſcruple upon any Word of God, we could anſwer you by ſome other Word of

equal

equal authority with you, and then we ſhould be heard, and be able to ſatisfy you, by reconciling Scripture with Scripture, and conſequently you to your ſelf.

It may be ſome fearful Saint, or ſome ſecure ſinner will object and ſay, I am not like to underſtand my preſent ſtate this way, for I can't believe the Word againſt my own ſenſe and experience, as I think, to the contrary. Having already ſpoken to doubting Saints, I'll ſuppoſe this Objection to be made by ſome ſecure ſinner. I Anſwer,

Admit this, *viz.* That you can't Believe, *&c.* yet however be perſuaded to draw up your caſe out of the Word, and ſay, (what you cannot but ſay, if you mind what you read) If the Word of God be true, I am in a loſt ſtate; but I have a better opinion of my condition than ſo. Could we bring ſecure ſinners thus far, the time may come, and will come, if you belong to God, when his Word will have more weight with you than your own preſent thoughts and imaginations; and then you'l judge of your ſelves, as the Word judges, and no otherwiſe: What ever your preſent hopes or fears may be, you'l come over to the Word,

Word, and be of the ſame mind with that concerning your Eternal ſtate.

Don't ſay as ſome generally do, If I am Elected I ſhall be Regenerated and ſaved at laſt; ſo putting off all from your ſelves, upon God's Decrees, as if they left no room for your Duty; as if the Decree of Election had no determining influence upon your wills, to bring forth what is decreed, in a way agreeable to your rational nature, by inclining you to the free uſe of all means appointed by God in order to your Salvation. Whereas you ſay, if you are Elected, you ſhall be Regenerated and Saved, pray follow that thought home, purſue it a little further, bring it to an iſſue; don't ſtop in the midſt of a thought, in the midſt of your reaſonings, but come to ſome concluſion.

If I am elected, I ſhall be regenerated, &c. But I am not Regenerated, therefore I am at preſent in a ſtate of wrath, and for ought appears yet in me, I may be in a ſtate of Reprobation. And is this a ſtate to be reſted in? Do you make ſo light of it? Can you eat, and drink, and ſleep ſo ſecurely under it? Methinks your own Hypotheſis ſhould lead you whether you will or no, to ſome conſideration of that dreadful concluſion which may follow upon

on it, ſince God has comanded you to *make your calling and election ſure*, and ſhewed you how you may do it. Since your preſent Comfort, and future Happineſs depends upon the proof of your Election, How ſhould you long to ſee this ſure and infallible evidence of it in your *Regeneration!*

CHAP. III.

III. *The Means of* Regeneration.

I Have already ſpoken of the principal efficient Cauſe of *Regeneration* under the firſt Head; I am now to ſpeak of the Inſtrumental Cauſe, or outward means of *Regeneration: viz.* The Word Preach'd, as appears by theſe following Scriptures, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. where *Regeneration* is plainly aſcribed to the Word, *James* 1. 18. God is ſaid to beget us with *the word of truth.* 1 *Cor.* 4. 15. *Paul* is ſaid to have begotten the *Corinthians* through the Goſpel, or by the Word of God which is able to ſave our Souls. Theſe Scriptures are an undeniable proof of theſe two things: 1. That there is a Virtue and Power in the Word, to work a change of heart and nature in thoſe

that hear it. 2. That this Virtue and Power is from God, whenſoever his Spirit concurs with it, it becomes effectual for our *Regeneration.* I ſhall give you four Reaſons, or rather ſome further Illuſtrations of this Truth, from the Scriptures; we muſt ſay nothing of the Word, but what we have from the Word, and what falls in with the experience of all Chriſtians, who live in any obſervation of the way of the Spirit of God, in turning their hearts to himſelf. I ſhall make out this in ſundry particulars:

1*ſt.* The Word is a proper medium for the Inviſible God to work by; we cannot behold his face becauſe he is Inviſible in his Eſſence; but we may hear his voice when he ſpeaks to us in our own Language. God never acts more like a God, like a Creator, than when he works by his Word; *He ſays*, and 'tis done; *let there be light, and there was light: Lazarus come forth*, and immediately a Reſurrection follows: He can as eaſily do as ſpeak; his Word is operative. God chuſes to work by his Word, that he may appear to do all by himſelf. As a Creator he has nothing elſe to work by: Thus he brings all things out of nothing; he that is the everlaſting *I am*, makes

makes that which is not, to be and exiſt; the eſſence and being of all things that are made, flows from the Lord *Jehovah*, the fountain of all being.

2*dly*, The Written Word is the moſt ſuitable means for God to make uſe of in all his dealings with his reaſonable creature Man: Speech is proper to Man, he only of all creatures has Ears to hear and underſtand words; as men communicate their thoughts one to another by words, ſo does God communicate his ſenſe to us by words; he puts his ſenſe into our words, adapting them to Divine myſteries, and thereby drawing them up to a higher ſignification, than the wit of Man can reach unto. The VVord is a very proper means for God to work upon Man by, becauſe it is full expreſſive of the mind of God; and when the Spirit is given from above, we ſhall have a right underſtanding of it; as a natural Man cannot know the things of God in the VVord, without the Spirit; ſo neither can a ſpiritual Man in this VVorld know them without the Word: we cannot come nearer to God now than the VVord brings us.

3*dly*, The Word is the Exemplar or Pattern of the Image of God, which is drawn upon the face of the new creature;

plainly repreſenting it to us in all its ſpiritual features. We have it before us as in a Table, that we may often examine our ſelves by it, and ſee how we anſwer to that Character which the Scripture gives of every renewed Soul, how like or unlike we are to it; the Word is the Mould into which we are caſt. The Glory of the Lord reflected upon us through the Glaſs of the Goſpel, leaves its own Image upon the Soul. As to know God in Chriſt is Eternal Life, ſo to behold his Glory with underſtanding, is the higheſt Glory we are capable of; as his Righteouſneſs makes us Righteous, his Wiſdom, wiſe, his Strength makes us ſtrong, ſo his Glory let in upon the Soul, is our glorification. Thus God is all in all to the Saints; there is ſome appearance of God in every thing that is excellent in them; their All is Chriſt in them, without him they are nothing; and it is by the Word they are transformed into his likeneſs. What is Grace but Truth put into the inward parts? the Law written in the Heart, the Word abiding in us, and turned into grace in our hearts? which is nothing elſe but a living principle of Faith and Holineſs, enclining us to keep the Word, which is an authentick copy, and tranſcript of the will of God to Man.

Rom. 6. 14.

2 Cor. 3. 18.

Where

Where there is an inward Man delighting in the Law of God, we may be ſure the Word has been effectual in that Soul. Who is that inward Man, but the new Man, the new Creature, born of the incorruptible ſeed of the Word? Rom. 7.

4thly, The Word works morally, the Spirit Phyſically; in plain Engliſh, thus; The Word makes an outward propoſal of the Object, the Spirit inwardly enlightens the faculty, diſpoſes the heart to receive it: as things of ſenſe are perceived by a more groſs corporeal contact, ſo things of Reaſon and Faith are let in, in a more intellectual way, by mental conceptions. How all intelligible things, purely rational, do ariſe from Senſe, I ſhall not now ſpeak to; but 'tis certain that all inward repreſentations of things purely ſpiritual and ſupernatural are made to us by the Holy Ghoſt; revealing Chriſt in us, and in him diſcovering to us the reality and truth of all the Word ſpeaks of.

The Word is of a perſuaſive ſtrain, full of reaſonings and arguings with Man; God debates matters with us, would diſcourſe us into a right underſtanding of his Will: Hence ſo many motives and exhortations; Faith it ſelf is but a perſuaſion, πίστις from πείθω to perſuade; but becauſe the things

diſcourſed of in the Word are ſupernatural, we muſt be ſpiritually illuminated before we can perceive them; the Natural Man perceives not the things of God. The Word is but an outward light, let it ſhine out never ſo brightly in the plaineſt and fulleſt Expoſition that can be given of it, yet ſtill 'tis but an outward light, which our dark minds cannot comprehend, 'till God enlighten them. Snuff a Candle never ſo often, a blind Man will ſee never the better; but when his eyes are opened, then he can diſtinguiſh between the dimneſs and brightneſs of the Candle: So 'tis with Believers, they are ready to take in the moſt ſpiritual ſenſe of the Word; 'tis that they wait for, they know that God does open his mind further and further to the Saints by the Preaching of the Goſpel, which makes them ſo much in love with Ordinances; and 'tis the rejoycing of their hearts to have any further diſcovery of the Mind of God made to them in any point of Doctrine, which they were not ſo clear in before, or at leaſt did not take ſo much notice of before. 'Tis obſervable how ſtrangely the Saints are affected, and that on a ſudden, with ſome old known truths, which they have a long time owned and profeſſed, but never found them ſo

warm

warm upon their hearts before; their hearts do glow and burn within them. What is this but the hand of the Lord with them at ſuch a ſeaſon, letting in his Word with power upon their Souls?

5thly, The Doctrine of Faith laid down in the Word, cannot be taken into the Soul, but by the Grace of Faith; no other principle will admit it. *The things of God knoweth no man, but by the ſpirit of God.* 1 Cor. 2. 11. That this living principle of the Grace of Faith in the heart, may be exactly ſuited to the Doctrine of Faith in the Word, God has ordered it, that one ſhould beget the other, to prevent all ſtrangeneſs between them, that they may the better fall in with each other.

6thly, The Word, as 'tis the means of *Regeneration*, is called *the Word of Life.* Life is promiſed to the hearing of it. 'Tis therefore called *the word of life*, becauſe 'tis the Word of *Grace*, in diſtinction from the firſt Covenant, which neither expreſſed nor intended any pardoning Grace to a ſinner: All the Words of the *Bible*, from the 3*d* of *Geneſis*, to the end of the *Revelations*, are words of Grace, tho there is frequent mention of the Law, of the Curſe of it, of fearful denunciations of wrath againſt ſinners; yet the end of all Acts 5. 20. Phil. 2. 15. Iſa. 55. 3. Joh. 5. 25. Acts 20. 32.

is to ſtir us up to accept of the Grace of the Goſpel. A pure Covenant of Works, excluſive of all Grace, is no where ſpoken of, but in the 2*d* of *Geneſis*, where God places *Adam* under that Covenant before the formation of *Eve*; *And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, and the Lord God commanded the man, ſaying, Of every tree thou maiſt freely eat, thou, thou,* &c. Here was none but God and *Adam* at the making of this Covenant: *Eve* was, no doubt, afterwards informed of it by her Husband, as appears *Gen.* 3. 2, 3. where ſhe repeats over that Covenant to the Serpent. Were not the Word of the Goſpel a word of Grace, there would be nothing for the Faith of a ſinner to lay hold on; no virtue nor power in it to beget life in a dead ſinner. The life we have by Grace, differs from the life *Adam* had at his firſt Creation, that came in with his firſt being; this is life from the dead, life given after the forfeiture of life, which is an act of mere Grace: To raiſe Man out of the duſt of the earth, and to make him a living reaſonable creature, was an act of God's Power and Soveraign good pleaſure: But after the fall to give him a new life, after he had choſen death, and ſunk himſelf under the

Gen. 2. 15, 16.

power

power of it; What can this be aſcribed to, but thoſe Bowels of infinite compaſſion in God to Man? He was not willing that Man ſhould die but live; and therefore fixes him in a ſtate of Eternal Life in Chriſt Jeſus. Since a creature-life was ſo uncertain, God joyns Man to himſelf in one Spirit, takes him into his own Life, that he may live for ever. *Becauſe I live,* Joh. 14. 19. *you ſhall live.* I am reſolved not to live without you: my delight is among the Children of men. I have choſen you from Eternity to be my Aſſociates and Friends, to be about my Throne, and to have fellowſhip with me for ever.

7thly, There are as many inſtances of the Power of the Word in *Regeneration*, as there are Believers now in the World, who do all aſcribe their New Birth to the Divine Virtue and Energy of the Word, ſet home upon their Hearts by the Spirit of God.

Application.

You ſee your Calling, Brethren, what outward Means God has appointed for your Converſion; Means not put into your hands for you to work by, and to ſhew your own skill in turning your own hearts, but

but a Means that God himſelf will work by: The reaſon why ſo few are converted by the Word, is becauſe they don't put their Converſion upon God, ſaying with *Ephraim*, Jer. 31. 18. *Turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned.* 'Tis our duty to ſubmit to the uſe of Means, to place our ſelves under them, waiting for the coming down of the Spirit to make the Word effectual; did we thus wait upon God in a real Dependance upon him, he would be found of us, his Arm would be revealed, we ſhould ſee more of his Glory in the Sanctuary. Let us come then with raiſed Expectations of what God only can and may do upon our Hearts, praying that he would give ſome ſignal Teſtimony to the Word of his Grace.

The Word of God is either a certain Truth, or a cunningly deviſed Fable; if it be a Fable, Why don't you throw away your Bibles, lay aſide your Profeſſion, reſolve never to hear a Sermon more? If it be a Truth, as I doubt not you all believe it to be, Why don't you follow it home, make ſomething of it? 'Tis a Word whereby you may be ſaved; give God no reſt day nor night, till you attain that Salvation. In our Saviour's time they followed him for the Miracles they ſaw done upon

on the Bodies of men; the Word can do as great Miracles now upon our Souls: When you are going to hear the Word, think with your ſelves, I am now going to ſee what further change of Heart God will work in me; what Renovation of Spirit; what further Enlightnings; what freſh Comforts; what further Increaſe of God I may find in my inward man! Did you come in expectation of theſe mighty works of God in and upon your Hearts, no place would be large enough to contain the comers to the word, that they might have ſome experience of his mighty ſaving Power paſſing upon their Souls: As *Moſes* lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderneſs, ſo we lift up Chriſt that you may look unto him, and be healed: You look unto men, you judge how much of Mans Wiſdom, Reaſon, and Underſtanding there is in a Sermon; but there is not that earneſt *looking for the power of God unto ſalvation*, as there ought to be.——Many come with itching ears to hear ſome new Notion ſet off with the enticing words of Man's Wiſdom, as if the ſtrength of Human Reaſon, by a Natural Operation upon the minds of men, could lead them into the belief of any thing that is ſaid in the Pulpit, without any inward efficiency of the Spirit;

but

but if this be all you look for, 'tis not worth your coming hither; we don't pretend to any ſuch Rhetorical Charms, to any ſuch prevailing Influence over you; you may excel us in Acuteneſs of Wit, Quickneſs of Apprehenſion; you may be greater Maſters of Reaſon than we are; but let me tell you, the right underſtanding of what we preach to you, depends neither upon your Reaſon nor ours, but upon the bare Teſtimony of God; we tell you, *Thus and thus ſays the Lord*; that's Reaſon enough for you to believe, and 'tis the higheſt Reaſon we can give for your belief; when you have once received any Goſpel-Truth by Faith, you will eaſily in the light of that Faith, allow of every thing that may be rationally deduced from that Truth, as included in it, and belonging to it, though not diſcerned when you firſt believed; here lies your Edification, to know the extent of thoſe Goſpel-Principles which you firſt took in by Faith; this Faith is the Gift of God; Miniſters perſwade you to come to Chriſt, to repent and believe the Goſpel, but 'tis God that turns the Heart to what we perſwade you to: we call upon blind, dead, dark ſinners to look unto Chriſt, but 'tis God muſt give them eyes to ſee him; all the perſwaſions

in

in the world, won't cauſe a blind man to ſee.

You'l ſay, *To what purpoſe then is all this moral Suaſion in the Pulpit.*

Anſwer, To very good purpoſe, that whilſt we are propoſing the Object to you, God may take occaſion to open the eyes of your Underſtanding, that you may, as men, diſcern the Object through the proper Medium of Scripture-language ſo plainly repreſenting it to you. Believers do find by daily experience, that the Words of the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture being ſo full, ſo appoſite and proper, do mightily help them in underſtanding the things of God, and to this end has God given all Miniſterial Gifts, That Preachers might be apt to teach, gathering up the ſum and ſubſtance of the Goſpel in their Sermons to the people; God has appointed this way of Inſtruction, has promiſed to be with us to the end of the world, and to work effectually upon the hearts of men by theſe very means; therefore let not any deſpiſe them, and count them fooliſhneſs; the Preaching of the Goſpel is the Power of God to Salvation; theſe Weapons are mighty through God, as they are in our hands, they ſignifie little, if God did not fight with them even in our hands; we hold

hold the Weapons, and manage them as well as we can, but the piercing edge, the overcoming weight and irreſiſtible force of them is from God; 'tis he that gives the blow, and does all the execution by them. God has in Infinite Wiſdom made choice of ſuch outward Means as have leaſt of Man in them, that whilſt we compare the weakneſs of the Means in a human Judgment, with the wonderful Effects of them in our hearts, we may be convinced of a Divine Power accompanying them.

Let us come then into theſe Aſſemblies with raiſed Expectations of ſome ſignal Appearance of God in his Word, for the carrying on this Great work of *Regeneration* in our Souls; we ſhould ſee the Glory of God, and be convinc'd that he is *among us of a truth*; you may come in one Spirit, go forth in another; come in one Nature, go forth in another; come in Scoffers, go home Believers; a plain propoſal of Chriſt as Crucified for us, was the means of Converſion in the Primitive Times, and ſo I am perſwaded it is ſtill: Some may with more Art, Elegancy and Learning, preach the Goſpel, yet there is nothing in all this for Faith to take hold of, but the naked Truth; it brings nothing elſe into the Con-

Conſcience, but drops all the reſt; What is the Chaff to the Wheat? I ſee nothing elſe required to believing, but a ſerious looking up to God in the uſe of means, for that anointing that teaches us all things; the Goſpel is plain enough in its own terms, *He that believes ſhall be ſaved; He that believes not ſhall be damned; Unleſs you repent you ſhall periſh*: What can be plainer ſpoken? We do as men know the common Notion of Faith and Repentance; tho what Faith in Chriſt Jeſus is, what Repentance towards God is, we know not: Here we are at a loſs, and ever ſhall be, till our Heavenly Father reveals theſe things unto us, giving us a true ſpiritual diſcerning of them. You have had a Bible a great while, but it may be have not taken ſuch notice of the Contents of it, as you ſhould; go home and open it once more, and ſay, This is the word of God to Man, and to me in particular; why ſhould I refuſe him who ſpeaks from Heaven? I will ſit down, and conſider what I have read, what I have often heard; you don't know what hold the Word may take of you, what impreſſions it may make upon you; it may fill your hearts with ſuch ſerious thoughts of God and Eternity, as you never had before: And let me tell you, if

ever

ever you be born again, it muſt be under the power of ſuch thoughts, kept up and impregnated in your hearts, whilſt you are thus muſing the fire will burn, and the work will be done, you'l find a real turning of the Heart to Chriſt, which is the Obedience of Faith, that every New-born Soul does yield to the call of Chriſt in the Goſpel.

'Tis a harder matter to Convert Profeſſors now to the power of the Goſpel, than 'twas to convert the Heathen World at firſt to the Profeſſion of it; then Profeſſion and Power went together; now they are unhappily ſeparated; men hide themſelves under a National Profeſſion, without any ſtrict inquiries after their Perſonal Intereſt in Chriſt. They came out of Heatheniſm one by one, into the power of Religion: But now an hereditary profeſſion of Religion come upon them, they know not well how, they have *Abraham* to their Father, born of Chriſtian Parents, and Baptized, this is all the account they can give of themſelves and their profeſſion: Here Religion ſticks, and here I am perſuaded it will ſtick; till God by a ſpecial diſpenſation of his Spirit ſuited to the formality of this profeſſing Age, does ſend out Miniſters by a ſpecial miſſion, to awaken

waken ſuch who have only a name to live, but are indeed dead. When the Goſpel was firſt Preached to the Heathen world, they knew they worſhipped gods of their own making, they knew they were unbelievers, and enemies to Chriſt and the Goſpel; but we Preach the Goſpel now, to thoſe who profeſs they worſhip the true God, profeſs Faith in Chriſt, and love to Chriſt; they profeſs themſelves to be all that already which we exhort them to. Therefore how ſhould we pray that God would pour out more of his Spirit upon his Holy Prophets, and ſend them forth under a freſh anointing, that they may convince the conſtant hearers of the Word, that ſomething more is required to the Salvation of their Souls than an outward profeſſion of Religion: And what that ſomething elſe is, we are all concerned to enquire after.

We muſt not flatter thoſe who have lived long under the means of Grace in an unregenerate ſtate; but plainly tell them to their faces, that they have already outliv'd the moſt probable means of their own Converſion: There is yet a poſſibility of it, God calls ſome at the Eleventh hour; and if it be that time of day with any that hear me this Morning, and

the hour of Conversion not yet come, let them wait upon God with trembling, for that blessed moment wherein his Arm may be revealed upon their hearts, before they have quite done hearing, and quite done living in this world; if God do them good, it must be by the Preaching of the Word, *which is the power of God unto salvation, to all that believe*. As the Word is the means of *Regeneration*; so of all after edification, and growth in Grace: If you want comfort, more strength against corruptions, more communion with God, the Word is of excellent use to you in all these Cases. *'Tis profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*

2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

CHAP. IV.

The manner of Regeneration, *how 'tis begun and carried on in the Soul.*

HERE lies the greatest difficulty of all, the similitude by which the manner of *Regeneration* is set forth; *Verse* the 8th. shews us that it is incomprehensible,

ſible, and not to be underſtood; therefore you may wonder why I undertake to ſpeak of it: Truly the whole Goſpel is a myſtery, and all the chief points of the Goſpel are deep myſteries; they do not only paſs our humane underſtanding, as men; but as to a perfect apprehenſion of them, they paſs the underſtanding of Chriſtians in this world; yet theſe things muſt be ſtudied by all Saints, they muſt be Preached by all Miniſters. Tho we propheſy but in part, and know but in part, yet who can tell, but God may reveal to us the unknown parts of theſe known truths which we have ſome underſtanding of already? This is viſible edification, a further increaſe of light, a further diſcerning of the Truth as it is in Jeſus. *As the wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou hearest the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goes*; i. e. No Man knows the certain point to which it will turn, till it be turned; ſo is every one that is born of God, i. e. ſo to others, not altogether ſo to himſelf; ſo to a Natural Man, who perceiveth not the deep things of God; but not ſo to the Spiritual Man who judgeth all things. So to others, who are not privy to the inward workings of the ſpirit upon his heart; not to himſelf,

who may underſtand ſomething of what is done in him, and upon him, if he diligently commune with his own ſpirit. He that hath the white Stone, knows the new name that is written in it. *Regeneration* is a ſupernatural work; but the effects of it are ſenſible. *Regeneration* is a great myſtery; we may be at a loſs in tracing the footſteps of the Holy-Ghoſt throughout this work: you muſt not expect rational demonſtrations, but ſenſible experiences; and ſo far as any thing I ſhall ſay, may fall under that head, I know you will follow me: If it happen otherwiſe, pray take better aim by your own light that may exceed mine, and judge for your ſelves, I impoſe nothing. The manner of *Regeneration* is not one and the ſame in all who are regenerated, tho the thing it ſelf, when done, be the ſame in all.

Elect Infants, dying in their Infancy, are regenerated after one manner, and adult perſons after another; the difference lies here, the *Regeneration* of Elect Infants, is the ſole immediate act of the Spirit of God, without the Word; it is indeed according to the Word, and purſuant to the Covenant and Promiſe made to *Abraham*, That God would be his God, and the God of his Seed: But it is not by the Word, be-

becauſe Infants are not ſubjects naturally capable of being wrought upon that way. You cannot expect I ſhould look further into this great Secret, it belongs to God only, and not to Man to know this: Therefore in my following diſcourſe, I ſhall confine my ſelf to the *Regeneration* of adult perſons, and conſider the manner of that, as the Scripture has revealed it. I deſcribe it thus in general; 'Tis wrought by the Spirit of God, as the principal efficient Cauſe; not without the Word, but by the Word as the inſtrumental Cauſe, or outward means of *Regeneration.*

Before I enter upon this, let me put this Queſtion, *viz.* I will put it, without any poſitive ſolution, only I will ſuggeſt to you my thoughts, and leave the matter to your further conſideration. The Queſtion is this: *viz.* Whether any who live till they come to the uſe of Reaſon, are Converted or Regenerated before they come to the uſe of Reaſon, after the manner of Elect Infants dying in infancy? I dare not deny but it may be ſo, becauſe of ſome Scriptures that look that way. *John* the *Baptiſt* is ſaid to be filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his Mothers Womb; *Jeremiah*, to be ſanctified from the Womb. Tho theſe Texts are capable of another conſtruction, 'tis evi-

Luke 1. 15.

Jer. 1. 5.

Gal. 1. 15. dent that *Paul* diſtinguiſhes his ſeparation, or ſanctification, from the Womb, unto Office, from his effectual calling by Grace in Converſion: But admitting this, that ſome now living may have been regenerated in their Infancy, before they come to the uſe of Reaſon; yet this I may ſay, that ſuch perſons, when grown up, muſt needs be little acquainted with the manner of their *Regeneration*, becauſe 'twas done before they knew it: nothing can fall under their obſervation, but the after effects of it, manifeſted in their lives; How 'twas at firſt wrought, is too hard a queſtion to put to ſuch.

I will venture to ſay this, That I conceive it is uſually otherwiſe, *viz.* That thoſe who live till they come to the uſe of Reaſon, are not ordinarily converted before they come to the uſe of Reaſon.

Becauſe God loves to be underſtood by us in all the acts of his kindneſs towards us, therefore he will have ſome part of the known hiſtory of our lives to be a ſtanding witneſs to us of our former unregenerate ſtate. *Such were ſome of you. I was before a blaſphemer, a perſecutor; but I obtained mercy.* He had undeniable proof and evidence of this in his own experience, and within his own remembrance;

1 Cor. 6. 11.
1 Tim. 1. 13.

which

which made him ſo much admire the free-Grace of God towards him, that put ſuch a difference between him and others, and between him and himſelf, heretofore and now. So that as the matter is caſt, I am only to enquire after the *Regeneration* of adult perſons, and to ſhew the manner of that. My Text leads me to ſpeak of ſuch who are come to the years of diſcretion and underſtanding, as *Nicodemus* was; my Miniſtry leads me to it, being ſent to Preach to ſuch: My Auditory conſiſts of ſuch; and therefore I ſhall apply my ſelf to you, and every one of you, about the manner of your *Regeneration.*

Among grown perſons, if you take the day of Converſion more largely, as the Scripture often does, for the day of their Lives, for the day of their outward Callings, generally termed the day of Grace, *i. e.* of outward Grace, ſo they all agree in the day of their Converſion; they are brought home to Chriſt within that time, or never; tho they do not all come in at the ſame hour of the day: But more of this by and by, when I come to ſpeak of the time of our *Regeneration*, which (to avoid all coincidence of matter) I ſhall comprehend under this Head *of the manner of Regeneration*, which the Scripture

gives us ſome light into; we may know ſomething of it.

The Manner of Regeneration.

1*ſt.* That a marvellous work is wrought in us, and upon us. We ſee a great difference between what we now are, and what we formerly were, even in our own remembrance. *Whereas I was blind, now I ſee. Such were ſome of you, but you are waſhed. Remember that ye being in time paſſed Gentiles in the fleſh, but now in Chriſt Jeſus. Called out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.* This is ſomething of the manner of *Regeneration*, which all Saints have ſome experience of; the change is ſo great, ſo univerſal, in every part and faculty of the Soul, *All things are become new*; that it cannot be altogether hid from a conſidering Chriſtian; he cannot reſolve the Cauſe and Reaſon of it into any thing but the Power of God; 'tis his doing, wonderful in our eyes. He that is born of God, knows and loves him that begat him, does naturally cry *Abba, Father*, from the Spirit of Adoption received in *Regeneration*; being born of the Spirit, he breathes and prays in the Spirit ever after; his heart is inſtructed and quickned by

Joh. 9. 25. 1 Cor. 6. 11. Tit. 3. 3. Epheſ. 2. 11, 13. 1 Pet. 2. 9. 2 Cor. 5. 17. 1 Joh. 5. 1. Rom. 8. 15.

by the Spirit to call God *Father*. *The ſpirit it ſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.* Gal. 4 6. Rom. 8. 16.

2*dly*, *Regeneration* does not only ſhew the wide difference between the two ſtates, the Regenerate and Unregenerate; but it comes in a different manner upon the Regenerate themſelves. I ſay a different manner; for there is no difference in the nature of the thing it ſelf, That is the ſame in ſubſtance, eſſence, and principle in all who are Regenerate: yet there are ſome circumſtances attending *Regeneration* ſometime, wherein one Regenerate perſon may greatly differ from another, even in the firſt moment of *Regeneration*, *e. g.* Some may be Regenerated and Converted into higher degrees of Grace in the firſt moment of their Converſion, than ſome others (tho as truly Regenerate as they) may attain to all their days; all in *Regeneration* do receive one and the ſame ſpirit of Grace, but not in the ſame meaſure. *Paul* was converted into an eminency in Grace; he was never a babe in Chriſt, but was born a ſtrong Man in Chriſt the very firſt moment of his Converſion. God had preſent uſe of *Paul*; he had deſigned him for eminent ſervice, which he was immediately to enter upon, and therefore God furniſhes

furnishes him accordingly. Let not weak Saints question the truth of their *Regeneration*, because they are not presently raised up to such degrees of actual Grace as they see in others.

Another Reason I conceive of this difference between Saint and Saint in their first Conversion, may arise from the different circumstances Grace finds them under, in respect, 1. Of their Years; 2. Of their Temptations: 3. Of their Employments and Callings.

1*st*. In respect of their Years. Some may be Regenerated in their Infancy, as was at first granted; they are capable only of habitual Faith, of the seed and principle of Grace. A Man is no further capable of Grace than he is of Reason; 'tis Reason that makes a Man a subject naturally capable of Grace, and Grace usually comes in in a degree proportionable to the strength of our rational faculties. Where there is but a principle of Reason, there may be a principle of Grace brought into that Soul; and where there is an actual understanding, there may be actual Faith proportionable to our actual Understandings. I shall not speak of Infants who are but habitually rational, and therefore can be

be but habitually gracious. But I shall begin with those who are next to Infants, newly come to the use of Reason, some are more early Converts than others. Mr. *Cotton* in his Exposition of 1 *John* 2. 13. says, that Children may act Grace as soon as they act Reason; may be made to know their Heavenly Father, as soon as they do their natural Parents. This is early indeed, yet I doubt not, but so it may be; only let me put in this Observation by the way. *viz.*

Observe. *The nearer our second birth lies to our first, the more undiscernable it is.* In its first rise and original, here Grace seems to grow up with Nature; *Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual.* The Apostle applies it to the Resurrection of the Body, and I may as fitly apply it to the Spiritual Resurrection of the Soul in *Regeneration*; so that you see the new creature is still the youngest Man, if compared to the old Man. The new creature is of a later extraction, an after birth, or a second birth; *But every man in his own order.* Should Grace come in with our first being, the first introduction of it could not be called *Regeneration.*

1 Cor. 15. 46.

Verse 23.

God

God does proportion his gifts of actual and efficacious Grace, according to the strength and ripeness of our active faculties; tho all Converts have the same principle of Grace, yet the younger sort in their tender years, are not capable of acting so distinctly as others may, who are of full Age, and have their Senses better exercised by reason of use. 'Tis said of
Luke 1. 8. *John*, That *the child grew and waxed strong*
Luke 2. 40, 52. *in spirit*. So of Christ himself, tho he was fill'd with internal habitual Grace at his first conception; yet proportionably to his Age his Grace did actually and more powerfully manifest it self. So 'tis with all young Christians, Grace in the active part of it, keeps peace with Nature, and does not offer violence to it; Grace may elevate and quicken our rational faculties, and bring them sooner to maturity: But it always takes our Understanding and Will along with it, in every act we put forth. Faith is a rational Grace, an understanding Grace, a wise Grace; there is much of the strength of a Man's rational Soul goes out in every act of Faith. Tho Faith be above Reason, yet Faith can give a Reason, why we should believe things above Reason; and so one way or other Faith doth deal with Man's Reason, even when it lifts up Man

Man above Reaſon. This may be one ground of the different degrees of actual Grace among ſome at their firſt converſion; I ſay actual Grace, becauſe that only is capable of degrees. A principle of Grace is the ſame in all, but variouſly acted, either according to the natural capacity of the ſubject, or the efficacious aſſiſtance of the Spirit; for let our rational faculties be never ſo quick and ſtrong, they cannot carry out a Child of God, much leſs others, to the leaſt act of Faith, without the help of the Spirit.

2dly, In reſpect of their Temptations. Thoſe who have been exerciſed with ſtrong Temptations, born down by the power of ſtrong Corruptions, when converting Grace comes, it comes with an actual ſtrength, proportionable to the actual reſiſtance that 'tis like to meet with, ſo pulling down the ſtrongeſt holds of Satan: Habitual Grace infuſed at our firſt Converſion, is the ſeed of God. The Spirit ſets 1 Joh. 3 9.
home the Word, and cauſes a ſpiritual conception in the heart; raiſes up the living Image of the living God in the Soul of a dead Sinner. This Immortal Seed, or Eternal Principle of Grace, has the ſtrength of Chriſt in it, and is able to cope with original corruption: But when

it

in opposes strong acts of sin in those who have been accustomed to do evil, and by their frequent practise do sin with a stronger hand than ordinary; in this Case a principle of Grace must be drawn out into acts of a proportionable strength to these mighty acts of sin, to put a stop to them for the future, and to turn the sinner from them. God said to *Paul*, *My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness: the power of Christ did rest upon him.* That degree of Grace may prevail over one sinner, that may not so soon prevail over another; I speak in respect of acquired habits or acts of sin, which hardens the heart the more; besides the Devil does not always make the like furious assaults upon all. God knows how to suit the dispensations of his Grace to the present necessities of the Soul: A Disease, the further it spreads, the deeper root it has taken in the Body, requires stronger Physick, and more effectual Remedies to remove it. So 'tis with the Soul, and Christ the great Physician applies himself accordingly, with a sufficiency of actual, effectual Grace. As he took notice how many years the Daughter of *Abraham* was bowed down, and bound by Satan; So he observes what power the Devil has got

2 Cor. 12. 9.

Luke 13. 11, 16.

over

over such, or such a Soul; if his name be Legion, Christ will cast him out, *being able to save to the uttermost.* Christ is more put to it to save some sinners than others, in comparison. There is (in this respect) a greater difficulty in saving some, than others. *How hard is it for them that trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God?* πως δυσκολον εστι. It signifies one who has a nauseating stomach, a narrow swallow; he kecks at every thing, nothing will go down with him: you may as soon draw a Camel through the eye of a Needle, as bring a rich Man to Heaven: But with God all things are possible. God is here brought in acting according to the utmost possibility of his power in saving a Rich Man: This may be another Reason why some are regenerated into a higher degree of Grace, and spiritual strength, than may be found in some others: All have the same habit of Grace in the principle, all have a sufficiency of actual Grace, but all have not the same measure, neither is it needful they should; and so comparatively, one Saint may be stronger or weaker than another in the first moment of *Regeneration.*

Mark 10. 24.

3*dly*, In respect of their Employments and Callings, which may render them capable

capable of higher service for God in the World, than others may be called unto: I instanced in *Paul* before, so I may in Magistrates and Ministers now. God in Conversion gives in Grace suitable to their Stations and Callings in the World. *Saul*, when anointed King, was turned into another Man; tho that was but a civil Conversion, yet it holds true in saving Conversion. Also, the Spirit of God divides to every man severally, as he will; and sets the Members every one of them in their proper place, *in the body*, under their proper peculiar gifts and qualifications, that may render them useful to each other. The Head cannot say to the Feet, I have no need of you; yet the Head is the most honourable part of the Body: And you should covet earnestly the best Gifts. There is a gradual difference in the Gifts and Graces of the Saints, according to the several Offices they bare in the Body of Christ, as Eyes, Hands, Feet, and according to the several opportunities that Providence puts into their hands, of serving the interest of Christ in their Generation.

1 Cor. 12. 12.

Verse 18.

Thus much of the *Manner of Regeneration*, in a more general way:

I shall

I ſhall now ſpeak to the *Manner of Regeneration*, with a peculiar reſpect to the Goſpel Notion and Nature of *Regeneration*, as it conſiſts in the Souls ingrafture into Chriſt, by a vital Union to him through Faith; Chriſt being the proper Fountain of that New Life which we derive from him in *Regeneration*, and which is ever after maintained by him in all his true Members, abiding under the quickning Influences of Chriſt their Living Head.

The particular *Manner of Regeneration* in this Goſpel-Notion of it, will further appear in the right ſtating of this following Queſtion, *viz.*

Queſt. *Whether the firſt ſtep in Regeneration be from Sin to Holineſs, or from a ſinful ſtate and nature to Chriſt, that we may be made holy by him?* I affirm the latter; There can be no Change made in our Nature by the Spirit of Chriſt in our Sanctification, but upon a Change of State from our cloſing in with the Blood of Chriſt for Juſtification. The Spirit of Chriſt doth always follow the Blood of Chriſt; 'tis the Purchaſe of that Blood; ſo that the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt, extends himſelf in all his ſaving Operations, no further than the Body of Chriſt; none but Members

vitally joined to Chriſt their Head, can be quickned by him; therefore no man or woman can be ſavingly wrought upon by the Spirit of Chriſt, who continue in a ſtate of ſeparation from him.

I grant many changes may be wrought in a mere natural man, which amount to no more than a Moral Reformation, and do all lye within the verge of an unregenerate ſtate.

Were there no more in Regeneration or Converſion, than a turning from Sin to Holineſs, than a change of Life and Manners, ariſing, as ſome would have it from that General Sufficient Grace, purchaſed for all, and which we may make effectual when we pleaſe; this puts Regeneration and Converſion into Man's Power.—— But *Regeneration* implies more than all this amounts to; not only a Change of Life and Manners, but of Nature and Principle; we muſt firſt fix the Principle, before we talk of doing; we may as well do the Actions of a living Man without Life, as act like Chriſtians without Chriſt; Chriſt is our Life, a quickning Spirit in all his Members.

Therefore I ſtate the Queſtion thus, *viz.* That the firſt ſtep in *Regeneration*, is from a ſinful State and Nature, to Chriſt. Or thus, *Rege-*

Regeneration is the Implantation of the Soul into Chriſt. Or thus,

Saving Converſion in the right Goſpel-Notion of it, is Converſion to Chriſt: 'Tis true, a turning from Sin to Holineſs, is the effect or conſequent of Regeneration, but 'tis not the thing it ſelf; the Tree muſt be made good, before it can bring forth good Fruit; ſo that Regeneration lies chiefly in our incorporation into Chriſt; till we are joined to the ſecond *Adam*, we are and ſhall be acted by that corrupt nature which we derived from the Firſt *Adam*. There were but two publick men in the World, and all men do take after one or other of them, either after the Firſt *Adam*, or after the Second *Adam*; they are the two Great Standards. Mat. 12. 32.

I will ſhew that this is the right Scriptural Notion of Regeneration and Converſion; to this end is Chriſt Preached, 1 *Cor.* 1. 23, 24. No other Name under Heaven by which we can be ſaved, *Acts* 4. 12. This Name muſt be publiſhed, *Acts* 9. 15. Regeneration, or our firſt Converſion, what is it but a revealing Chriſt in us? *Gal.* 1. 16. Drawing unto Chriſt, *John* 6. 44. Receiving Chriſt, *John* 1. 11. Following Chriſt, *Matt.* 9. 9. 'Twas Chriſt they came over to in Converſion; hence thoſe Phra-

ſes of our being in Chriſt, and Chriſt's being in us, living in us, *Gal.* 2. 20. Formed in us, *Gal.* 4. 19. Put on by us, *Gal.* 3. 27. *Rom.* 13. 4. Thus you ſee how the New Creature, or the Regenerate Perſon, has his Life, Being, and whole Subſiſtence in and from Chriſt. *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature.* We are taken up ſo much with Duties of Evangelical Obedience, that we commit a great error in our firſt ſtep; do not go over to Chriſt and begin there; thence it is that the Saints are called *Chriſtians*, becauſe their Original is from Chriſt; they bear his Image, are acted by his Spirit, partake of his Nature.

2 Cor. 5. 17.

Act. 11. 26. 2 Pet. 1. 4.

If this new Life be from Chriſt, what is the way of its derivation from Chriſt unto us, or how comes this Virtue from Chriſt into our Souls, that both our ſtate and nature ſhould be thus changed in him, and by him, in order to newneſs of Life in our after Converſation? You muſt give me leave often to put Queſtions, why, and how, and which way; becauſe I am now enquiring after the Manner of *Regeneration.*

If you ask, How Life comes to be derived from Chriſt into the Soul of a dead Sinner?

Anſwer,

Answer, I say, this is effected by our vital union to Christ. —— We need not wonder that such a change is wrought in those who are thus joined to the Lord in one and the same Spirit; we cannot come so near to Eternal Life it self, and not be quickned by it; we cannot remain dead, when we thus enter into Life it self.

The main Query is, How this Union is brought about between Christ and our Souls?

Answer, The Spirit takes hold of us, and joins us to Christ; working Faith in us at the same instant; by which we take hold of Christ, improving the Grace of Union to a real Communion with Christ, *we dwelling in him, and he in us.* 'Tis union to Christ, that gives Life at first, and maintains it ever after in our souls. We have our first quickning from this Union, and all after increases of Spiritual Life, are but so many fresh emanations from Christ the Fountain of Life, flowing into our Souls. Thus we have Life, and have it more abundantly from Christ. I shall prove this Union between Christ and Believers, as 'tis productive of Life it self in its first vital Principle, and also as it is the cause of all after-growth in Grace, proceeding from the higher and more vigo-

1 Cor. 6. 17. Eph. 2. 8. 1 Cor. 1. 9. Joh. 6. 56.

rous operations of this Life, raiſed and kindled in the Soul by the enlivening influences of the Eternal Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus; in both theſe reſpects, as it cauſes and continues Life in the Saints, is this Myſtical Union between Chriſt and Believers, ſpoken of in the Scriptures; *The glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.* The Glory that was given to the Man Chriſt, did all ſpring from the Union of the Human Nature to the Divine; next to this is the Myſtical Union between Chriſt and Believers; the enlivening influences of this Union are ſet forth by an Incorporation; by an Ingrafture. The Miniſtry of the Word is an outward means of bringing this Union about, making a tender of Chriſt to us, and calling upon us to receive him. Miniſters are the Inſtrumental cauſe of this near Conjunction between Chriſt and Believers; *They are the friends of the bridegroom;* who give the Saints in Marriage unto Chriſt. *I have eſpouſed you to one Husband.* You ſee how the Scripture variouſly ſets forth our Union to Chriſt, who is our Life. *Regeneration* is the beginning of this new Life and Nature in the Saints, which ſhews it ſelf more or leſs, after an inward effectual call;

Joh. 13. 22, 23, 24.

1 Cor. 12. 12, 13. Rom. 11. 17, 19. 23, 24.

Joh. 15. 1, 2.

Joh. 3. 29. 2 Cor. 11. 2.

Col. 3. 4.

call; we know 'tis God the Father's Voice who ſo calls us; becauſe a Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation accompanies it, powerfully enlightning our Minds. Joh. 6. 45.

By our Union to Chriſt, we ſtand in a ſpiritual Relation to him, as his Brethren, Spouſe, and Members; and this ſpiritual Relation to him, gives us a right to all that he hath purchaſed for us, *He that hath the Son, hath life*, &c. We have an Intereſt in his Righteouſneſs; 'tis ours by Imputation; we being his, his Righteouſneſs becomes ours; we cannot have Chriſt without his Righteouſneſs, which in the Infinite Merit of it, extends it ſelf to all Believers, *Rom.* 3. 22. Thus we are made the *righteouſneſs of God in him*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. Chriſt takes hold of us by his Spirit, and by ſo doing, enables us to take hold of him, by Faith of his own operation in us; ſuch a *Regeneration*, ſuch a Converſion as this, derives from him a Principle of Spiritual Life, by which we are carried out to all good works, *Epheſ.* 2. 10. 1 Joh. 5. 12. Rom. 4 3.

I ſhall further explain the Manner of our Union to Chriſt.

Chriſt took our Nature upon him, without the ſin that cleaves to it in us; this was done by a Miraculous Conception;

when Christ took our Nature, his Eye was upon the Persons of the Elect: The Hypostatical Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in the Person of Christ, was in order to the Spiritual Union of our Persons to the Person of Christ; Christ took our Nature, abstracted from our Persons, and consequently without sin super-induc'd upon it by *Adam*'s Fall; the Person corrupted the Nature in the First *Adam*, not the Nature the Person, as now it does.

Quest. Though Christ have taken our Nature upon him without sin, yet how can we maintain this Union and Communion between Christ and our Persons, in whom there is so much sin?

Ans. *Ans.* 1. Christ joins himself to nothing but the New Creature, holds Communion with nothing else in the Saints. *Light has no Communion with darkness, nor Christ with Belial.* Nay, he does not so much hold Communion with us, as takes us into Communion with himself.

2. This Communion between Christ and Believers, is carried on and manag'd on both sides by the Holy Spirit; and therefore must needs be a Holy Communion.

3. The

3. The design of Christ in uniting us to himself, is to cleanse us from all sin, to purge them quite out, and to sanctifie us wholly in Body, Mind and Spirit. The Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of Burning, it consumes by degrees all that is contrary to it self in our Persons, and will at last make us exactly conformable to himself: we shall bear the image of the Heavenly *Adam*, and take after the perfect Human Nature of Christ, *i. e.* Human Nature in us, tho it is now corrupted, yet when *Regeneration* has had its perfect work upon us, it shall even in our Persons be reduced to that Rectitude, Harmony and Perfection as 'tis now in the Man Christ; then we shall be men indeed, Glorious Men and Women, when we have derived our Human Nature from Christ in all its Perfections, and under that Divine Tincture which the Hypostatical Union gives it in Christ.

In *Regeneration* we pass over (by Faith) both Body and Soul into Christ; some present effects of this, we see in our Souls now; and when our *vile Bodies shall be made like unto his Glorious Body, we shall to Eternity bless God*, who has taken us out of the First *Adam*, and put us into the Second.

This

This Spiritual Union of Believers to the Divine Perſon of Chriſt, makes a living Impreſſion of Godlineſs upon their Human Perſons, which cauſes them to grow up daily into a further Conformity to the Image of Chriſt, as God-Man, till they come to the ſtature of Perfection in him, reſembling him in both his Natures; in the Perfection of his and our human Nature in him; and in ſuch a ſpiritual Participation of his Divine Nature, as Creatures are capable of; and ſtanding in this Myſtical Union to the Divine Perſon of Chriſt, *they behold his Glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God*; it ſhines out upon them in Heaven, to all Eternity, and lifts them up to the higheſt Communion with God, that Creatures are capable of, and this is their Glorification. Thus I have led you from the firſt ſtep in *Regeneration* to the laſt, that you may ſee the Bleſſed Tendency of ſo great a work, begun here in this World, and compleated in the next.

I told you, That *Regeneration* is initially, and ſeminally, all that belongs to a ſtate of Grace, ay, and of Glory too; therefore I may inſtance in any thing that lies within the Compaſs of a ſtate of Grace, whether Adoption, Vocation, Union to Chriſt,

Chriſt, Juſtification, Sanctification, and not recede from the Subject I am upon concerning *Regeneration*; for all theſe do nearly concern it, and lye cloſe about it.

Some would ſuppoſe our Union to Chriſt, and conſequently, by virtue of that, our Juſtification by Chriſt, to be before Actual Faith, even in adult Perſons, and conſequently without it; they inſiſt upon a Priority in Nature and Time, and build Poſitions upon that diſtinction that will not hold; they who ſpeak with the Learned, muſt underſtand with the Learned, and uſe their terms in their ſenſe; they do not ſuppoſe this Priority or Poſteriority to be in the things themſelves, but only in our manner of Conception, we firſt apprehend one, and then another; tho we may apprehend one thing without another, or before another, it does not follow that thoſe things are really without or before each other; things that cannot be ſeparated, may by a preciſe act of the Underſtanding be diſtinguiſh'd; but theſe *ſigna* or *momenta rationis*, that men of art make uſe of to guide their Thoughts, are too great ſubtilties for vulgar Heads to meddle with; it may be you do not reach me in what I am now ſaying, and it matters not whether you do or no: it renders the Argument

ment so much the stronger against the use of such Scholastick Terms in Divinity; I am casting them out, and perswading you from mingling vain *Philosophy* and *Science*, falsly so called, with the Mysteries of Faith, which are best understood in their own native simplicity, as they are delivered to us in plain Scripture-language. They who hold Justification before Faith, are afraid lest they should be betrayed into a Justification by Works, if they should hold otherwise; and therefore chose rather to plead for a Justification before Faith, and without Faith, lest they should seem to be Justified by any thing in and from themselves; but how contrary is this to Scripture, *He that believeth not, is condemned*? But he that believeth not, is justified, is no where written in my Bible.

Joh. 3. 18.

They will admit of Habitual Faith, but are afraid of actual Faith, lest that should encroach too much upon free Grace, and lessen that; for say they, an act of Faith is Mans act; and nothing that is so, must have any place in Justification.

1*st*, I Answer, Is not a habit of Faith, a Mans habit? Is it not infused by God into Man, and placed in Man? Is not Man

the

the Subject of this Habit? But this is wrought by God; and is not every Act of Faith wrought by God in the Soul of a Believer? I ſee no more danger in allowing actual Faith, than habitual.

2*dly*, We muſt diſtinguiſh between an Act of Faith, and Works of Faith; Works of Faith, are not Faith, but an Effect and Fruit of Faith; an Apple is not the Tree, but ſomething growing out of it, and upon it, as diſtinct from it; but an Act of Faith, is Faith it ſelf; 'tis Faith reduced to Act, or actual Faith. 'Tis true, an Act of Faith, is mans Act, deriving all its Virtue, Efficacy and Signification from Chriſt the Object; but 'tis not properly a Work, but Faith it ſelf; ſo that I ſee no danger of running into Juſtification by Works, by aſſerting Juſtification by Faith.

3*dly*, As an Act of Faith is not properly a Work, in the legal Notion of a Works; it is not within the Covenant of Work; is it any where contained there, that we ſhould act our Faith upon Chriſt, for the free Pardon of Sin? Beſides, the Scripture expreſly denies Faith to be a Work in this Senſe. *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs*; therefore *believing* is not working for Juſtification. Rom. 4.5.

4*thly*,

4thly, An Act of Faith is the only Act of a Man, that entirely falls in with the
Rom. 4. 16 free Grace of God: *Therefore it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace.* An Act of Faith, is a receiving Act; it brings nothing of our own to Christ, but an empty hand receiving all from him, ascribing all to him, excluding all manner of boasting; how can such an Act of Faith interfere with our free Justification?

5thly, We say, That the τὸ *credere*, or Faith as our Act, justifies no Man, tho we allow the instrumentality of it in Justification, as that by which we apprehend the Object Jesus Christ, by whom alone we are justified. When we say we are justified by Faith, we mean no more but this, That we are justified by Christ received and applied; does it therefore follow, we are not justified by Christ alone?

Did we well consider the Nature of Faith in its Principle and Relative Essence, and also in its manner of acting, we should better understand the matter, and clearly see that Faith excludes all Works, even its own Act out of Justification. Tho it self be the Act of a Man, wrought in him by God; yet 'tis an Act so subservient to free Grace, so intirely falling in with it, that it does not in the least derogate from it; but

but declares to all the World, that Chriſt is the Sinners only Righteouſneſs, and leaves him relying upon Chriſt only for his Juſtification. This is the meaning, this is the ſenſe of an Act of Faith: Novel Expreſſions are apt to beget ſtrange novel Opinions, and therefore we ſhould have a care of them: Faith well acted upon Chriſt, will never injure the free Grace of God; why ſhould we run up our *Regeneration* and *Juſtification* into ſuch ignote beginnings before Faith, which we can give no account of to our ſelves or others, before we believe? I ſee not of what uſe this is, to ſoar aloft beyond the Knowledg and Experience of all Chriſtians; let us not be wiſe above what is written.

I am yet upon the Manner of *Regeneration*, and all preparatory Works naturally running into the manner of *Converſion* or *Regeneration*. I ſhall a little conſider them. The beſt way to underſtand the manner of doing a thing, is by obſerving all Preparations made for it; all *Præludiums*, or Introductions in order to it; therefore it will be neceſſary to look a little into the nature of theſe Preparatives, which ſome lay too great a ſtreſs upon, limiting the Spirit of God to their own

own unscriptural Methods; an Error is soon committed here. We may run upon the Merit of Congruity ere we are aware, if we don't hold the Ballance of Truth with an even hand, keeping close to the Genius and Spirit of the Gospel, in all that we say of this matter; which I shall reduce to these following Heads, —— shewing you,

1. What Preparatory works are.

2. Whether there be any such certain Preparatory works always antecedently necessary to Conversion, and what they are, how they are all comprehended under Conviction of sin.

3. That the Law is of excellent use to work this Preparatory Conviction.

4. That there is Law enough taken into the Gospel to do this.

5. That the Law is to be Preached, but never alone by it self, without any mention of Gospel-Grace.

6. We must not limit the Spirit of God to such or such degrees of Humiliation, Repentance, Contrition, or Terror. Upon these Hinges my whole Discourse will turn. If any Word or Phrase I shall use, be not to your liking, you may please your selves with your own way of Expres-

sion.

ſion, and ſpeak your own language; if we agree in Principles, and underſtand the ſame thing, as I hope we ſhall, it matters not much whether we expreſs it in the ſame manner.——I ſhall keep to the method propoſed, and not mingle things, unleſs it be when one Particular may borrow light from another, then a looſer joint diſcovery does beſt.

1. What Preparatory Works are?—— In the Senſe of thoſe who contend moſt for them, they are certain previous Diſpoſitions wrought in the Soul, in order to Converſion, yet ſhort of Converſion it ſelf. Here are Two Opinions about this.

Some would have theſe Preparatory Works to be Saving Works; I grant eventually they may be, and are ſo ſometimes; but not being always ſo, I ſee not how that can be called *Saving*, under which a Soul may eternally periſh; or how any Saving Work can be wrought in any before they are in Chriſt.

The Second Opinion more agreeable to Truth, is of thoſe who call theſe Preparatory Works, yet common Works of the Spirit, but always further carried on in all elect adult Perſons, till at laſt they iſſue in true Converſion. Here we agree; but

for thoſe who place this Preparatory work in ſuch and ſuch certain degrees of Humiliation and Contrition, affirming, That Converſion is not ordinarily wrought any other way, than by thoſe Legal Steps, not one of which is to be bated; this needs ſome Explication.—Of which more anon.—That God does by his Word, by his Spirit, by his Providence, prepare all his Elect for Converſion, I no way doubt; but how this is done, whether God does obſerve the ſame way, manner, and method in this Preparatory work in all that are converted, as he may do in ſome, is not ſo clear to me.

2. Whether according to Scripture, there are any ſuch certain Preparatory Works, always antecedently neceſſary to Converſion, and what they are; how they are all comprehended under Conviction of ſin; whether Repentance, Humiliation, Contrition, Terror?

This Conviction of ſin muſt be preſuppoſed in all who come to Chriſt for Pardon; *The whole need not a Phyſitian.* Here we muſt diſtinguiſh between initial and compleat Converſion; I mean, between Converſion begun, and Converſion riſing up to a ſenſible Cloſure with Chriſt: Conviction of Sin is always antecedent to an act

act of Faith upon Chriſt, for the Pardon of ſin, at leaſt it muſt be concomitant with it, elſe there can be no reaſon given of a ſinner's coming to Chriſt; but that ſuch or ſuch a degree of Humiliation, Contrition, *&c.* is always pre-required unto Converſion; I cannot ſay that, Converſion is a ſudden ſecret work of God upon the Soul, as the Wind blows, *&c.* If we obſerve how the Spirit comes upon ſinners where it liſts, of all ſorts and tempers, of all conditions and circumſtances, drawing their hearts to Chriſt, we ſhall find it a hard matter to give this Preparatory work any certain particular name; I am perſuaded 'tis very various and different; it may be, not altogether the ſame in any two that are converted; therefore to lay down a preparatory work in all its circumſtances, common to all that are converted, is very dangerous; that which hath occaſioned this, is mens dwelling upon a diſtinct work of the Law, as a Schoolmaſter to Chriſt; becauſe the *Jews* of old were trained up under a legal adminiſtration of the Goſpel, therefore the whole work was then aſcribed to the Law, whereas the Law was never ſeparately propounded to the *Jews*, but always in ſome dark Typical Conjunction with the Goſpel, tho

they did not ſee to the end of thoſe things, yet theſe Types, Shadows and Ceremonies had a Goſpel-end. What tho there was a Legal Diſcipline in the Church of the Old Teſtament? This is no warrant for us to ſet up pure Legal Preaching under the New; the Law of it ſelf works no ſaving Conviction of ſin in any, further than the Spirit of the Goſpel goes along with it. We may tell men their doom according to a Covenant of Works, but we are bound at the ſame time to preach Chriſt to them, and not leave them under the Law, in hopes of a Preparatory work that may fit them for the Goſpel. The Law alone works too violently; we cannot ſtand under the terror of it, *Heb.* 12. 18. We are not called to Preach Damnation to ſinners, but Repentance; Chriſt came not to condemn the world, but to ſave it. We do indeed preach Damnation to impenitent unbelievers, but firſt we preach Repentance, which we cannot do from the Law alone; therefore ſomething of the Grace of the Goſpel muſt be mingled with the ſeverity of the Law; for if that alone be preſſed, we may drive men to utter deſpair, I mean an abſolute deſpair of Salvation, which prepares none for the Goſpel, but quite alienates their minds from it, as

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an offer made too late. Indeed a deſpair of Salvation by the works of the law, may prepare for Chriſt, but then we muſt Preach Chriſt too; I think we ought not, no, not for a Moment, to conceal all Intimations of Goſpel-Grace from convinced ſinners purpoſely to keep them under the terrors of the law, till they are as we judg ſufficiently broken and humbled. Some have been put into ſuch a fright by that way of proceeding, that has diſtracted them all their days. Certainly a Goſpel-Miniſtry is the only Miniſtry appointed by Chriſt; there is law enough in that to bring us to the knowledg of ſin; the Goſpel does hold forth the danger, and the remedy too; and ſo muſt the Preachers of the Goſpel. God is ſo far from expecting any preparations in Man, that he calls men of all ſorts, which ſhews that Converſion is not limited to ſuch or ſuch antecedent qualifications in us. God knows beſt when to begin his work in us; we muſt leave it to his Infinite Wiſdom to chuſe the ſeaſon wherein he will ſhew us this Mercy; he that gives the gift, knows the fitteſt opportunities and moments to beſtow it upon us. How many are ſurprized with a ſudden Converſion, in a time when they looked not for it; when their Friends and Relati-

ons did little expect it, when they seemed to be in a frame fartheſt off from it, breathing out Cruelties and Threatnings, as *Paul*; but when the time comes according to the purpoſe of God, of their effectual Calling, the Work is done in an inſtant; the heart is ſuddenly ſtruck, and the Sinner turn'd into another Man, to the wonder of all who behold it. God prevents us by his Grace, turning us to himſelf; ſometimes in the height of our obſtinacy; and when we are without all previous Diſpoſitions to ſuch a Converſion, *Iſa.* 65. 1. He finds a heart of Stone in us, and turns it into a heart of Fleſh. Conviction of Sin is always included in Converſion; 'tis a part of the Call it ſelf; while a Sinner is in his way to Chriſt, actually coming to him, he comes every ſtep he takes, under a Conviction of his Sin and Miſery, that Mercy may be the ſweeter to him; this is but as the opening of a Wound, when a healing Medicine is to be applied; ſome Wounds may be longer in opening and dreſſing than others, we muſt leave this to the Wiſdom of our heavenly Phyſitian. Conviction of Sin is not only neceſſary to our firſt Converſion, but to all Acts of after Converſion in the Saints themſelves, when they have fallen into

into any foul ſin. God made *David* feel the burthen of his ſins. We muſt be made to know what God in juſtice may do againſt us, before we come to him for Salvation: he is a juſt God and a Saviour. Mercy is moſt acceptable when we ſee our ſelves in miſery. *I was brought low, and the Lord helped me*, ſays *David*. Pſal. 38 4. Iſa. 45. 21. Pſal. 116. 6. Pſal. 118. 13.

3. The Law is of excellent uſe to work this Conviction, that is abſolutely neceſſary to Converſion. The Law is our Schoolmaſter; we are under the tuition of the Law, but not under the dominion of the Law; not at the diſpoſal of the Law. The Law is our Counſellor and Director, but not our Lord and Maſter; it has not power of life and death, as formerly it had: The Law was given after the Fall to another end, than 'twas before the Fall. The Law was a Covenant of Life to *Adam* ſtanding, declaring the juſtification of a Righteous Man; but now 'tis as loud in condemning the Sinner. The Law ſpeaks to Man according to the different ſtate he is in, of Innocency or Sin: The condemning voice of the Law is kept up in the ears of ſinners, to provoke them to come to Chriſt. The Law was Four hundred and thirty years after the promiſe made to *Abraham*, and could not diſannul Gal. 3. 24. Gal. 3. 19, 20, 21, 22.

the Covenant of Grace, but only ſerves as a School-maſter to lead us to Chriſt. The great Leſſon we are now to learn is Chriſt, faith in Chriſt: The Law ſerves to evince the neceſſity of this, the Law teaches the ſame thing with the Goſpel, but not by the ſame argument: It argues from love, not wrath.

4. There is Law enough comprehended in the Goſpel to work this preparatory conviction of ſin; we have an authentick Copy of the Law in the *New Teſtament*; 'tis kept there on record, *in terrorem. Curſed is every one*, &c. *Do you not hear the Law*, ſays *Paul?* Thus the Goſpel ſets life and death before us: Death to all who are under the Law, and Life to thoſe who are under Grace; therefore let us ſtudy the Goſpel, and ſtudy the Law in the Goſpel.

Gal. 3. 10.
Gal. 4. 21.

5. The Law is to be Preached, but never alone by it ſelf, without any mention of Goſpel Grace; nothing purely legal can prepare a ſinner for Converſion; the Law muſt be Preached, not legally, but Evangelically, as 'tis in the Hand of our Mediator, who knows how to uſe it for Conviction, for Humiliation and Repentance. The Law tempered with the Goſpel is an excellent means for the Spirit of Chriſt to work by; the Law is now appendant to the Goſpel; ſo much of the

Law

Law is taken into the Goſpel as is ſufficient to produce Conviction, Humiliation, and Terrour too, if need be; but the Law alone is not to be Preached; That is not in our Commiſſion, as we are Miniſters of the *New Teſtament.*

This Preparatory work I am ſpeaking of, is principally aſcribed to the Goſpel, as appears by *John*'s Miniſtry. *John* the Baptiſt was the greateſt Legal Preacher in all the New Teſtament, yet a true Goſpel Preacher too; *viz.* his ſpecial buſineſs was to carry on this Preparatory work in order to converſion; and how does he do this? obſerve his method; he proclaims the coming of Chriſt, draws arguments from thence to bring them to Repentance. *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; therefore repent. He calls them a generation of Vipers, tells them of the wrath of God, and preaches the Baptiſm of Repentance for the remiſſion of ſins. He points to Chriſt, *Behold, the lamb of God, that takes away the ſins of the world*, that was *John*'s ſubject. *Peter* converted the *Jews* by Preaching Chriſt, and Remiſſion of ſin in his name; the remedy muſt not be concealed. Though *Peter* denounces a heavy Judgment againſt *Simon Magus*; yet he lays down ſome ground

Luke. 1. 16. 17.

Matt. 3. Luke 3.

Luke. 3. 3. John. 1. 29.

Acts. 2. 38. 39. & 3. 19.

Acts. 8. 22.

ground of comfort, had he had Grace to conſider it; we muſt keep back nothing
Acts 20. 20. God would have ſpoken to ſinners; we muſt not be always affrighting your conſciences with Legal Terrours, 'tis neceſſary ſometimes to draw the Sword of the Law, that ſinners may ſee their danger; but we muſt tell them alſo whither they muſt fly for refuge; elſe we preach not the Goſpel; we don't know how far the Sword of the Law may enter, how deep it may cut into the Conſcience of a convinced ſinner; it may be dangerous to leave the wound bleeding one night, without applying ſome Goſpel-Lenitive, pouring in ſome oyl: our firſt Faith in Converſion ſometimes takes more after the Law, ſometimes more after the Goſpel, as the Spirit ſets it a work either for Terror or Comfort; we muſt not limit the Spirit of God in one or the other; we muſt not ſay ſuch a one ſhall be humbled to ſuch a degree, ſhall lie ſo long under Terrours of Conſcience, before comfort be ſpoken to him; the Spirit is the beſt judge of this; and knows our frame better than we do, and what way of procedure is moſt ſuitable to the inward ſenſe and feeling of ſuch a one's Soul; this muſt be left to God to ſpeak Comfort or Terror when and in what degree he pleaſes. We who

who are Miniſters, muſt lay down the ground of both in our Preaching, and inſiſt upon one or t'other as we ſee occaſion.——But God may do as he will. If I ſee a broken humble ſinner a little revived under a ſenſe of Mercy and Pardon, I would not check his comfort, nor ſeek to bring him under terrors again: but if I ſee a hardened impenitent ſinner going on in his ſins, I would lay the Law before him in the moſt terrible manner I could, and ſhew him the dreadful conſequence of a Courſe of ſin perſiſted in, that the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all ſuch who do not repent, and turn to God, that they may find Mercy: we cannot Preach the Goſpel, but we muſt refer to the Law; the Goſpel ſhews how we may be delivered from the curſe of the Law, and therefore muſt needs mention it, and I am ſure we ought not to Preach the Law alone without any diſcovery of Goſpel Grace.

6. We muſt not limit the Spirit of God in converting ſinners to ſuch or ſuch degrees of humiliation, contrition, or terror as we think neceſſary; for we are not competent Judges in that matter: ſo much Contrition of ſin as cauſes a loathing of ſin, a deſire to leave it, and to obtain Mercy of

of God, in the Pardon of it is ſufficient for converſion; God may carry on this Humbling work farther or farther, to a higher or lower degree as he thinks fit, as the preſent frame of our hearts may require. Saving Conviction is the firſt thing in order belonging to Converſion, but that conviction to ſuch a degree of Repentance, Humiliation and Terror, ſhould always be a fixed conſtant Preparatory work, antecedent to all beginings of true Converſion, is not ſo evident. That all true Converts are convinced of their Sin and Miſery by Nature, I no way doubt; and that the Law is of excellent uſe to work and heighten theſe Convictions, is not to be denied; and that many be under meer Legal Convictions and Terrors, who may or may not be afterwards converted, is not diſputed neither; the Spirit of God may improve a common work, thoſe terrors or any other afflicting providences, to lead a ſinner to Chriſt; but it does not therefore follow that ſuch Legal Terrors muſt always go before Converſion, no more, than ſuch or ſuch awakening Providences made uſe of by God to Convert ſome, ſhould neceſſarily befall all who are converted.

Saving Goſpel Conviction of ſin, includes in it all that is in a mere Legal Conviction,

on, with this difference, that under a Goſpel Conviction of ſin, we ſee the folly of it as well as the danger, and always have an eye to Chriſt, which does alleviate the ſinking overwhelming Terrors of a meer Legal Conviction only, which is as the nethermoſt Hell, a dark dungeon indeed, without the leaſt cranny for any beam of Goſpel light to ſhine in upon a poor diſtreſſed Soul, trembling under a ſence of eternal vengeance. It is not the deſign of Chriſt that any ſo concluded under wrath by Law, ſhould be left one moment without any tender of Goſpel grace, which if they do reject and deſpiſe, God may and does ſometimes judicially give them up to a final Tormenting deſpair. We cannot rationally urge upon ſinners that which is the conſequence of final unbelief, till we have firſt Preached the Goſpel to them; and then at their peril be it, if they believe it not.

Some Convictions of ſin that iſſue in Converſion, will be found to have their beginning with it, *i. e.* ſome Convictions that iſſue in a viſible Converſion, may have their beginning in an inward, latent, and yet inviſible Converſion to us, that does not at preſent appear under that name. To our diſcerning, the Soul may be in

in travel ſome time before the New Creature appears, before we can ſay ſuch or ſuch a one is born of God, and yet the Converting act of the Spirit of God may be truly paſſed in that Soul, before it is manifeſt to us, in the ſenſible effects of it.

Let us not ſeparate ſaving Conviction from true Converſion, and look upon it as only Antecedaneous and Preparatory to it, when indeed 'tis a real part of it, and eſſentially belonging to it.

A true Goſpel ſaving conviction of ſin, is a higher work of the Spirit of God in a regenerate Soul, than a meer Legal Conviction of ſin is in a Natural man, let it run up into never ſuch Frights, Fears and Terrors.

There are ſome common lower works of the Spirit, that may be, and are ſometimes miſtaken for ſaving grace, and there are ſome ſpecial ſaving works of the Spirit, that go but for a common work with ſome.

Common works are not always in the intention of God ſo much as Preparatives for Converſion; it may be ſaid to be *finis Operis*, but not *Operantis*, God not giving them Grace to improve their Legal Convictions, either they wear off, or elſe they ſink under them into deſpair.

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The Law may terrifie a ſinner, but till his heart comes to be affected with the love and mercy of God, he will never turn from ſin; but then his Soul melts within him, he looks unto him whom he has pierced, and is in bitterneſs. The ſenſe he has of the love of God to ſinners in Chriſt Jeſus, kindles love in his heart towards God, which is a full evidence of real Converſion. We never turn to God, but we begin to love him, then we grieve for ſin as ſin; with a true godly ſorrow, that cauſeth Repentance unto Salvation. 2 Cor. 7. 10.
'Tis the duty of Miniſters to make known the myſtery of the Goſpel. *Paul* was afraid he ſhould not ſpeak out, ſpeak plain enough, and ſo am I. Eph. 6. 19.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the Time of Regeneration.

SOmething of this fell in under the former Heads, therefore I ſhall ſay the leſs of it now. The Time is in this life. All who live with God in Heaven hereafter, are born to him and of him here on Earth. This whole time is called the day of Grace; *To day if you will hear his voice:* And there is a particular hour in that day, wherein Saving Grace takes hold of us by God's Effectual Calling, which is beſt known by our Obedientiall Hearing, when we anſwer to the Call, Lord here I am, ready to comply with thy Will in all things; What wouldſt thou have me to do? and I will do it. Conſult your ſelves about this; when you firſt find your wills brought over to Chriſt, write down that as the day of thy Converſion; you can give no account of a real work of Grace till then; your knowledg cannot prove it ſelf Saving, till it thus operate upon the Will, in turning that to God: So that the time of thy *Regeneration* is when thy heart is firſt drawn up to truſt in Chriſt, let it fall in what year of thy life,

Heb. 13. 13, 15.

life, in what hour of the day it will, ſo the thing be done, it matters not when as to the iſſue of it; to be converted, is neceſſary to Salvation; but to know preciſely the time when, is not neceſſary, provided you know the time when it was not; or at leaſt not ſo manifeſt to you as now it is. It ſhall be done unto the laſt as unto the firſt; the laſt and the firſt Converts in an Age are equally welcome to God, and there is ſomething peculiar in both, that does very much ſet forth and ſignalize the freeneſs of God's Grace, *viz.* That he converted the one ſo ſoon, and the other ſo late; that he came ſo early to one who had heard ſo little, and that he came at all to the other who had heard ſo much, and deſpiſed it. Late Converts are very rare; he that comes not in now, while 'tis called to day, may ſlip his opportunity, and die under a dreadful conviction, that he obſtinately refuſed a fair offer of life and pardon that was made him at ſuch a time, in ſuch a Sermon, by ſuch a Preacher, who may be called forth to witneſs againſt him at the laſt day. Whether you believe, or not believe, the Word will have its effect one way or other upon you all, either as a ſavour of life or death. When the ſavour of the knowledg of Chriſt is not

2 Cor. 2. 14, 15. a ſweet Savour, we take offence at it; Death indeed may follow that deadly ſcent; 'tis a dangerous ſymptome of Eternal death to be offended at Chriſt, at the purity and ſtrictneſs of his Heavenly Doctrine. A diſtinct remembrance of the certain time, means and manner of our converſion, is very comfortable; but tho we be at ſome loſs here, yet if we can prove the thing it ſelf, 'tis enough. He that does the real actions of a living Man, gives ſufficient proof and demonſtration of his firſt conception and real birth into the World, tho he knows not the day and hour of either.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The End of Regeneration.

1. THAT God may raiſe up a Holy Seed unto himſelf, that ſhall be counted for a Generation to ſerve him. That he may have a Church and People here on Earth, devoted to his fear, profeſſing his Name, and keeping up his Worſhip. *All people will walk every one in the name of the Lord his God; and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.* By our firſt birth we are brought forth into the World Enemies to God and Godlineſs; by our ſecond birth, we partake of the Divine Nature, become a Holy people unto the Lord our God: a peculiar people.

Pſal. 22. 30. Ezek. 11. 19, 20. Micah 4. 5. Deut. 14. 21. Tit. 2. 14. Exod. 19. 5, 6.

2. That his Elect may be made meet for Heaven, and fitted up for Glory. God begins all this in *Regeneration*, which is purſuant to Election. All thoſe Names that are written in Heaven, or in the Lamb's Book of Life, ſhall be begotten again unto that Life, which in the Eternal purpoſe of God belongs to their Names. They are a choſen Generation, which is the cauſe and ground of their *Regenera-*

Rom. 8. 28, 29, 30. Luke 10. 20. Rev. 21. 27. 1 Pet. 2. 9.

tion: All the reſt of the World will be left in darkneſs, in Idolatry, to worſhip the Dragon, whoſe Names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb ſlain
Rev. 13 8. from the foundation of the World. They who belong not to this choſen Generation, are rejected of God, never to be born again. *Regeneration* is a ſure evidence of Election: God demonſtrates his Eternal Love to us, by this ſignal effect of it in our *Regeneration.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The Scripture Marks and Signs of Regeneration.

1. HE doth not commit Sin. 1 Joh. 3. 9.
2. He doth Righteousness. 1 Joh. 2. 29.
3. He believeth that Jesus is the Christ. 1 Joh. 5. 1.
4. He overcometh the World. 1 John 5. 4, 5.
5. He loves Christ and all the Saints.
6. He desires the sincere Milk of the Word. 1 Pet. 2. 2.

They are not my Marks, but God's, laid down in his own terms, as 'tis written in your *Bibles*; what you find in your selves answerable thereunto, I must leave to God and your own Consciences. The Text tells you, *Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* And *John*, in his Epistle tells you, unless these marks be found upon him, he is not born again: and dying in that estate, is excluded Heaven for ever. *John* foreseeing what false notions of *Regeneration* men would take up with, and rest in, to prevent all fraud, all mistakes in so great a point, lays down these infallible marks of true, real *Regeneration*, as 'tis distinguished from that which is but pretended, false and counterfeit;

For ought I ſee, there is no more required to *Regeneration*, in the judgment of ſome men, than to be born in ſuch a Country where Chriſtianity is profeſſed, and to be Baptized according to the cuſtom of the place; this is the whole of *Regeneration*, as ſome ſtate it, tho none of theſe marks appear in them, but the quite contrary: They commit Sin, they don't do Righteouſneſs, they hate Chriſt and his Members, are overcome every day by the World, and the temptations of it; yet theſe muſt go for Regenerate perſons, let the Scripture ſay what it will to the contrary. But let us not deceive our ſelves, God will judge us by the Word, and none will be looked upon at the laſt day as truly regenerate, in whom all theſe marks are not found. I do not ſay that all are unregenerate who ſee not all theſe marks in themſelves, but thoſe who have them not; to be wholly defective in any one of them, overthrows our ſtate: Theſe marks are ſo linked together, as to the certainty of their being, that they are inſeparable, tho as to our perceiving 'tis otherwiſe: we may not ſo clearly diſcern ſome of theſe in our ſelves, as we may ſome others. I would carry it with as gentle a hand as I can; I perceive theſe marks in the right appli-

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cation of them, will bear hard upon us all, and it may be, leave us under a godly jealouſy of our ſelves, examining our ſtate with trembling. Truly this I aim at, I am ſure we ſhall ſuffer no loſs or damage by it in the end. God has put his own ſtamp upon his own workmanſhip, that it may be known to be his. Shew me your *Regeneration* under God's ſeal and mark, and I ſhall rejoyce with you in it, and pronounce it to be his workmanſhip indeed. And now Brethren, produce your evidences, ſuch as the Word of God calls for. I ſhall begin with the firſt Mark:

1. He doth not commit ſin, he cannot ſin. He ſinneth not, but doth righteouſneſs. Here is a Negative and a Poſitive Mark, what he doth, and what he doth not. I ſhall firſt ſpeak joyntly of them both together, and then ſeparately of each apart by themſelves. 1 Joh. 3. 9. 1 Joh. 5. 18. 1 Joh 2. 29.

The ſenſe in general of this Scripture, is, That he who is born of God, does ſo far expreſs his Image, and take after his Holy Nature, as to hate that which is evil, and to love that which is good; he has put *on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. Eſcaping the corruption that is in the World* Eph 4 23, 24.

2 Pet. 1. 4. 1 Joh. 2. 29. *through luſt. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteouſneſs, is born of him.* He proves the new-born Soul to be a true Child of God, becauſe he ſo much reſembles his Heavenly Father in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs; we cannot be partakers of his Nature, but we muſt be alſo partakers of his Holineſs: they are inſeparable. But to keep to the Negative mark, *He commits not ſin &c.* The common interpretation of this Text is, That ſuch who are born of God, ſin not with full conſent and allowance, they go not on in a courſe of ſin, they ſin not the ſin unto death, *&c.* All this is true, and does belong to the interpretation of this Text; yet I conceive there is ſomething further intended as the ground of all this, *viz.* That he who is born of God, as ſuch, ſins not at all. He that is a new creature may ſin, but not as a new creature; this is an abſolute truth contained in the Text. Under all the diſtinctions, limitations, and ſoft interpretations that are given of this Scripture, we muſt be ſure to maintain the words of the Text as they are expreſſive of a certain abſolute truth, elſe we ſhall quite loſe the mark here laid down by the Holy Ghoſt, of *Regeneration*; and therefore I ſhall

firſt

firſt fix that, and make it as plain as I can, that we may the better judge of our ſtate by it; 'tis matter of Life or Death; all is now upon Tryal; your eternal Intereſt lies at ſtake, therefore in ſo great a caſe we had need go by ſure marks and ſigns, and none ſo ſure as thoſe that are in expreſs terms laid down by the Holy Ghoſt, of *Regeneration*; as we muſt not raiſe them too high in contradiction to other Scriptures, ſo neither muſt we ſink them too low, leſt we loſe that Characteriſtical difference that the Holy Ghoſt here puts between the Regenerate and Unregenerate; the mark lies here, *viz.*

That there is in every Regenerate Soul an inward living Principle of Grace and Holineſs inclining us to good, but never to evil, always giving check to ſin, never approving or allowing of it.

A Regenerate perſon may fall into acts of ſin, through humane Infirmity, but cannot give himſelf over to ſin in a conſtant habitual way; he cannot go on in ſin; 'tis againſt his Nature; he may be ſurprized into an act of ſin, but the new Nature will quickly recover it ſelf, and caſt out that ſin by Repentance. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit*; ſin is not ſo connatural to a Regenerate Perſon; Mat. 7. 18.

Person; he can't brook it, his heart rises against it, from the Antipathy he has to it; when he does sin, he would not sin, and this we say, is from the Grace of *Regeneration*.

The assertors of Free will, do hold, That man cannot incline to good, without the general assistance of the Spirit of God; but they own only such an assistance as may be resisted by us, and leaves it to our option whether we will do good or evil; but that the will of man should be determined by God to a good act, and yet act freely under that determination, is that which some will not understand, supposing such an overruling efficacy of Divine Grace to be inconsistent with the liberty of man's will. The prevailing efficacy of sin in fallen man is undeniable; whose thoughts and imaginations are evil, only evil, and that continually; yet those thoughts and imaginations, with all outward acts proceeding from them, are free; so that what they deny to the efficacy of grace, they allow to the efficacy of sin; That, it seems, does not destroy the liberty of mans will, but the efficacy of grace does: the mistake lies in a misapprehension of the Nature of Irresistibility; grace is irresistible, not because it cannot be resisted, but because it cannot be over-

overcome, elſe 'twould not be effectual; the efficacy of Saving Grace lies in gaining over the free conſent of the will to follow its motions and inclinations.

God made man perfect; and that he might not impoſe upon his rational Nature, left him a free agent, giving him liberty to good or evil; his Perfection did not lye in having liberty to evil, but in not uſing it, in abſtaining freely from evil out of choice; when he fell, God withdrew and left him perpetually inclined to his own firſt choice, which nothing can draw him off from, but effectual Grace; not by forcing, but changing his will. It was never the intent of God in our firſt Creation, that man ſhould exert his power both ways, to do good and evil; but that he ſhould freely chuſe his own way at his firſt ſetting out, and be delivered up into that Power which he ſhould firſt Exerciſe. By his obedience he would have been confirmed in good, never to have fallen from it; ſo by his diſobedience he was confirmed in evil, never to be recovered out of it, till free Grace of its own accord relieved him. And this it does gradually, not all at once, which is the reaſon why the Saints in their imperfect ſtate here, do both good and evil, being fleſh as well

well as Spirit. Grace has the Predominancy, because it enters in against the full Power of reigning sin, breaks in upon corrupt Nature whether it will or no, sows immortal seed, where never good fruit grew before; the Predominancy of sin lies in a total exclusion of Grace, but the Predominancy of Grace lies in its gradual entrance into the Soul, because it opposes the whole body of sin, or indwelling corruption, in making this forcible entrance, forcible in respect of corruption that would keep it out; free in respect of the renewed will, through which it passes by consent; God in opening the heart, makes the heart to open it self. Believing is our act, but the power of doing it, is God's. They who are endued with this Divine Power, cannot do the evil they would do, and are inclined to by nature: Gal. 5. 17. *They are no more servants of sin.* Rom. 6. 17. *But have ceased from it.* 1 Pet. 4. 7. They cannot sin; there is something in them called here the seed of God, that cannot sin, 1 *John* 3. 9. *They are born of God*; but he that committeth sin, is of the Devil, *ver.* 8. a Child of the Devil.

To clear up this further.

There are two different Natures, two con-

contrary Principles in the Saints, Fleſh and Spirit; the Scripture ſpeaks of them ſometimes according to one Principle, ſometimes according to the other, and ſometimes according to both; as Fleſh, ſo no good thing dwells in us; we all ſin; he is a liar that ſays he has no ſin; as Spirit, ſo we don't commit ſin, we can't ſin; are inclined only to good, by that Divine ſupernatural Principle; as Fleſh and Spirit, ſo not a juſt man upon Earth but ſins, tho he be juſt and holy, truly ſanctified in his Regenerate part, yet he is unjuſt, unholy, unſanctified in his unregenerate part; there he fights againſt God; the law of the Members wars againſt the law of the Mind; the ſenſe of this remaining enmity againſt the Law of God, makes the Saints complain of their wretchedneſs. *O wretched man that I am.* Rom. 7. 24. What careſulneſs, what clearing of themſelves, what Indignation and Revenge? 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. Tho God has forgiven them, they cannot, they will not forgive themſelves, they cut off their right hands, and pluck out their right eyes.

The Scripture ſpeaking of a Saint according to one or other of theſe two Principles, ſpeaks of him perſonally as two Men, each diſtinct from the other; as if a Saint

a Saint when acted by a carnal Principle, were not the same Man with himself, when acted by a spiritual Principle. Physically and substantially, he is the same Man under both Principles; but spiritually considered under those Divine Qualifications belonging to him, as a new Creature; he is not the same Person in God's account, not by his own reckoning; *not I, but Sin that dwells in me.* Could we keep up this distinction under a prevailing Temptation, clearing our selves, and laying Sin at its own door; *not I, but Sin*; 'twould afford much comfort to us, and quicken us up to a speedy Repentance. An unregenerate Man when he sins, he can't say, 'tis not I; he lies if he says so; he sees nothing in himself that opposes Sin as Sin; no, 'tis his own proper doing, his own act, his whole Will is in it; he can't say, *the Evil I do, I would not do.*

Can we in any sense say, That we do not commit Sin, that we cannot Sin, do no iniquity? Is there such a Principle within us, that we can say from our Consciences, we would not Sin, even when we do Sin? That 'tis against our Inclination, 'tis a force upon the new Creature; we are in Pain, and cry out under that Act of Violence committed upon us,

Psal. 119. 3.

Rom 7.16

'tis

'tis an unwilling Captivity that we are led into.

I have done with the Negative part; what a regenerate Perſon does not, He does not commit Sin. I come to the Poſitive part, He doth righteouſneſs. 1 John 2. 29.

Negative holineſs in abſtaining from ſuch and ſuch Sins, will never prove a Man to be born of God; we cannot conclude ſafely and ſtrongly from this negative Mark, That we are born of God, unleſs it be from the univerſality of it; if we can truly ſay, We hate every evil way, do fly all appearance of Evil, cannot ſuffer Sin in our ſelves or others, without a holy Indignation againſt it; this indeed has ſomething in it, is very ſignificant; we may infer from hence, that we are born of God; that which makes this Mark ſo concluſive and ſignificant, is not only the univerſality of it; but chiefly this, that where-ever this negative Mark is, there is alſo the poſitive Mark to be found; he that *eſcheweth Evil, does Good.* The force of one Mark is beſt underſtood in Conjunction with ſome other; one ſingle Mark is but a ſlender evidence of a ſtate of Grace, unleſs it run into ſome other, which is the inſeparable conſequence of it. 1 Pet. 3. 11.

The Poſitive part is, He doth Righteouſneſs

neſs; what do ye more than others? *Operatio ſequitur eſſe*; all things have their active qualities, eſpecially where there is Life, there muſt be active Faculties, and an active Principle; life it ſelf is an act; the life of a Chriſtian is a life of the higheſt activity, from Principles truly Divine and Heavenly, that have their energy, virtue, and efficacy from God himſelf, who is a moſt Pure, Simple, Eternal Act, the Fountain of all Action and Motion to his Creatures, as he pleaſes more or leſs to communicate himſelf unto them. Since we are made partakers of the Divine Nature, ſurely 'tis in order to a godly life, that it may appear whoſe off-ſpring we are, whoſe image we bear; being born of the Will of God, we muſt do the Will of God, which is the only rule and meaſure of all Righteouſneſs; in doing which, we muſt reſpect the matter what God commands, and the manner of doing what is commanded. What is materially good, is obvious to all who know but the Moral part of Religion; all the difficulty lies in the manner of performing it; the ſpirituality of the action lies here, that it be done from a Goſpel principle, and to a Goſpel end; it muſt be done in Faith, and in a conſtant dependance upon Chriſt

Chriſt for ſtrength, doing what we do as unto the Lord, out of a Religious reſpect to his Holy will; whatever we do, we muſt do to his Glory; 'tis below a Chriſtian to ſeek himſelf, to live to himſelf. God hath ſet a part the man that is Godly, for himſelf.

Theſe are ſure marks of *Regeneration.* Hold the glaſs of the word cloſe to your Conſciences, look again and again upon theſe Scriptures, examin your ſelves ſtrictly by them; Can you prove your *Regeneration* by theſe marks as they are proper and peculiar only to the Regenerate? 'Tis not every forbearance of ſin, nor every outward act of righteouſneſs, that will come up to this mark; theſe Scriptures ſpeak ſomething to the experience of every one who is born of God, that no Unregeneman in the world underſtands; *The ear tries words as the mouth taſtes meat*; the word has a peculiar relliſh and ſavour in it to a Spiritual pallate, *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him*; the word reveals it, it opens the heart of God to man, and laies open a man to himſelf, diſcerns the thoughts and intents of his heart; 'tis κρίτικος ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας a diſcerner, a critical judge of the frame of a mans heart, and of the ſtate of his Soul;

Job. 34. 3.

Heb. 4. 12.

ſhews a Child of God how, and wherein he differs from an unregenerate perſon; and by this diſcerning Word we muſt judge of our ſelves: *He that is born of God, commits not ſin,* cannot ſin, but does righteouſneſs; you who are born of God, do know what God means by theſe words; I am ſure you know it; there is a ſtrong ſpirit in theſe words; they are critical words; diſcerning, diſtinguiſhing words; and if there be any true life in you, they will more or leſs affect you; you cannot but be concerned at the hearing of them. Hold the higheſt Spirits to the Noſe of a dead Man, rub him all over with them, yet no heat, no motion, no lively colour, becauſe he has not a natural principle of life to mingle with them, to feed upon them: I would commend my ſelf to your Conſciences this day, I hope you feel me, as well as hear me. When you drink any ſtrong ſpirits, they heat within; the vital ſpirits do take them in, feed upon them, are raiſed by them: ſo when ſpiritual truths are held cloſe to the Conſcience, if there be any life there, the Spirit of God within thee, will cloſe with the Spirit of God without thee in the Word; there will be an *inward burning in the heart:* the Leaven works ſtrongly; and under theſe inward work-

Luke 24. 32.

ings

ings of ſpirit I deſire to leave you, debating the matter between God and your own Souls till you have brought it to an iſſue, and can ſay by the light of theſe Scriptures, that you are, or are not born again.

2. He doth righteouſneſs: *Every one that doth righteouſneſs, is born of him*; and, *Whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs, is not of God.* 1 John 2. 29. 1 John 3. 10.

The more we reſemble Chriſt in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, the more evident it is both to our ſelves and others, that we are born of him, deſcended from him, and therefore cannot but take after him; a true Chriſtian is, and will be a follower of Chriſt; this genius or diſpoſition to all practical righteouſneſs, flows from our new Birth, riſes out of the new Nature, which the Apoſtle aſcribes to the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, as the procuring cauſe of all newneſs of life in us, which is but our likeneſs to his Reſurrection; we die with Chriſt; that we may live with him, being freed from ſin, not ſerving it any more, *but yielding our ſelves unto God as thoſe that are alive from the dead, and our members as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God.* This plainly proves every regenerate perſon, as ſuch, to be a doer of righteouſneſs, inclined to all ho- Rom. 6. 4. verſ. 13.

lineſs by virtue of his *Regeneration*, which caſts in a new leven, makes us a new lump; as original Sin infected the whole man, ſo *Regeneration* ſanctifies the whole man, in Body, Soul and Spirit: *The fruit of the ſpirit is in all, goodneſs, righteouſneſs and truth*; *Regeneration* inclines us to follow Chriſt; the filth of the Soul is carried off *by the waſhing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*; hence we are ſaid to *be born of water, and of the Spirit.*

1 Theſſ. 5. 23. Eph. 5. 9. Matth. 19. 28. Tit. 3. 5. John 3. 5.

There is a natural inclination in a regenerate man to do good; he does it willingly, not by conſtraint; Grace is got into his nature; the Law is written in his heart, therefore his heart inclines him to keep the Law.

Jer. 31. 33.

As Sin entred, ſo Grace enters; Sin entred into all the powers and faculties of the Soul, weakning the whole man; ſo Grace diffuſes it ſelf through every part of the Soul, ſtrengthning the whole man in every part In *Regeneration* we are renewed after the Image of Chriſt, growing up into his likeneſs, like in judgment and affection; not that our natural Faculties are altered, but only brought under the power of a ſupernatural principle; we don't ceaſe to be men, only we become new men, men of other minds, ſpirits and diſpoſitions, than before,

before, taking after the ſecond *Adam*, not after the firſt; being by Faith implanted into Chriſt, we are made partakers of his Divine Nature; this is called a ſecond Birth, or a new Creation, though out of the ſame phyſical materials of Fleſh and Blood, the change is only ſpiritual; as the Wild Olive, when engrafted into the True, as to its materials remains ſtill the ſame; 'twas wood before, ſo 'tis ſtill, only there is a new ſap ſecretly convey'd through the pores of it, which make it bring forth more kindly, and pleaſant Fruit: ſo the Sinner, as to his phyſical ſubſtance, was Fleſh and Blood before converſion, and ſo he is ſtill; yet there is an inward ſpiritual change wrought in him by his implantation into Chriſt, who infuſes his Nature, Spirit and Grace through the Man, ſo making him a new Creature, not taking away his Manhood, but ſanctifying his Nature. God is the Fountain of all Holineſs, 'tis eſſential to him, it goes along with his Nature, is entail'd upon all who are born of God; being partakers of the Divine Nature, they muſt needs be holy as God is holy; God appropriates goodneſs and righteouſneſs to himſelf in the abſtract, and is the original Spring of all righteouſneſs in the Saints.

Let us exert and put forth our new birth, and live a life of faith; *The life which I now live in the fleſh, I live,* &c. We are created in Chriſt unto good works, that we ſhould walk in them; Let us then abide in Chriſt, that we may *bring forth much fruit*; *for without him we can do nothing.*

Gal. 2. 20.

John 15. 5.

Corruption indeed is always active in a Saint, becauſe it acts naturally without any ceſſation; but Grace does not always act, at leaſt ſo ſenſibly in a Saint, becauſe it muſt be firſt acted by the Spirit, who is a free Agent: ſhould Grace always be as active in us as Corruption, we ſhould miſtake it for Nature, and aſcribe all to our ſelves; the Spirit of God is always in Believers, but does not always work ſo effectually, ſo ſenſibly; the operations of it are not ſo manifeſt to us as ſometimes they are.

This righteouſneſs that is ſaid to be done, lies not ſo much in the perfection of the Deed, as in the perfection of the Doer; he aims well, though he cannot always hit the mark; he cannot do the good he would, yet he *wills* it, and that is *doing* in God's account, who accepts the will for the deed.

The

The inclination or tendency of a new-born Soul to holineſs, appears three ways.

Firſt, Before the Temptation, *i. e.* not before the being or exiſtence of a Temptation, for there is no ſuch ſeaſon; we are always compaſſed about with many Temptations; a regenerate Soul is aware of this, and fears always. But before we enter into this or that particular Temptation that we ſee coming towards us, or have reaſon to ſuſpect from the preſent circumſtances we are under, here a regenerate perſon watches and prays that he may not enter into that Temptation, that God would ſome way or other divert the Temptation, or fortify our hearts againſt it, that we may repel it. A Temptation may enter into us, when we don't enter into it; then it goes, as it comes, and makes little or no impreſſion upon us: when a Temptation ſhews it ſelf to us at ſome diſtance, the Seed of God in a regenerate Soul preſently takes the alarm, puts on the whole armour of God.

Secondly, Under the Temptation, when the Fleſh has betrayed the Soul into the hands of a Temptation, has been tampering with it, then does Grace ſtruggle and

fight, and cry out unto God for help; all this shews the activity of Grace in a way of righteousness, how loth it is to be overcome of evil.

Thirdly, After the Temptation, when 'tis ended, or finished, then it issues either in the commission of the Sin, or conquest over the Temptation. Grace shews it self both ways.

First, After the commission of Sin; what repentance, what godly sorrow, what shame, what indignation, what revenge?

Secondly, After the conquest over the Temptation; what rejoycing, what thanksgiving, what triumphing in the Grace of Christ?

So that you see here lies the manifest difference between the Children of God, and of the Devil —— An unregenerate man cannot do righteousness; his skill lies not that way; he is wise indeed to do evil; but to do good, no knowledg, he is a meer Bungler at a good work; his hand is always out, because his heart is never right with God. He may do what is materally good, but always fails in the manner; those spiritual Ingredients which the Gospel requires to a work truly holy, are wanting.

Thirdly, *Who-*

Thirdly, Whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God. And every ſpirit that confeſſes that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is of God. 1 Joh. 5.1. 1 Joh. 4.2.

They prove each other, being inſeparable.

The going forth of the Soul, by Faith, unto Chriſt, as the anointed of the Lord ſent and ſealed by the Father, to undertake the great work of Man's Redemption, is a ſure evidence of *Regeneration.* All unregenerate men are ſtrangers to Chriſt, they know him not, they deſire him not, they think they can ſhift well enough without him: None know the Son of God, but thoſe who are born of God. When the Spirit comes into us, then we confeſs that Chriſt is come in the fleſh; Chriſt conveys himſelf through our nature, to our perſons; the Divine and Humane Nature muſt be firſt united, before our perſons can be admitted to any communion with him. The Humane Nature of Chriſt is the foundation of all our Communion with God: our acceſs to God is through the veil of his fleſh. Being born of the Spirit, we ſtand related to the Perſon of Chriſt, he is not aſhamed to call us Brethren; we can then call God our Father, *Obſerv.* Heb. 10. 20.

ther, as he is the Father of Chriſt our elder Brother. God was the Father of Chriſt before his Incarnation, and continues ſtill to be ſo after his Incarnation, not only to him, but to all who are born of his Spirit: The Spirit of Chriſt being the Spirit of him who is God and Man, knows how to raiſe up a ſeed of godly men and women.

The Infinite Eternal Spirit of the Son of God, being poured out without meaſure upon the Man Jeſus Chriſt, operates through both his Natures, hypoſtatically united in his Divine Perſon, in whom all the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells bodily, without any diminution of its infinite excellencies, and Divine properties, from the aſſumption of our finite humane nature; ſo the ſame Eternal Spirit of Chriſt dwelling in us, in a lower way of union to our perſons, does act indeed Divinely, but yet according to our finite capacities; all intellectual acts are finite or infinite, as the perſons are that do them; the Perſon of Chriſt being infinite, ſo are his ſpiritual actings, notwithſtanding his finite nature as Man; ſo the actings of the Spirit of God in the Saints are finite, becauſe their perſons are ſo. *Actiones ſunt ſuppoſitorum:* Actions are perſonal, of greater or leſſer degree

degree of efficacy and power, as the perſons are that do them.

Faith in Chriſt Jeſus being the birth of the Spirit, muſt needs be an infallible mark of *Regeneration*; the deſign of the Spirit of God in working Faith in us, is to bring us to the knowledg of Chriſt, and through him to the knowledg of God, wherein conſiſts our true happineſs; *This is life eternal to know thee, &c.* Faith is the beginning of Eternal Life in the Soul; and the manner of conveying this Eternal Life from God unto our Souls, is called *Regeneration.* Thus you ſee how he that believes that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God.

The next inquiry will be, how Faith does this; or how believing in Chriſt does work that univerſal change in the Soul, which the Goſpel calls *Regeneration.*

Tho the beginning, or rather all the eſſentials of *Regeneration* are found in the firſt principle of Faith, created in us by the Spirit of Chriſt, yet this does not appear to us but by thoſe lively operations of this Faith put forth by us. We have an inward feeling of theſe operations, the ſenſe of which does lead us to ſome diſcerning of that ſpirit and principle from whence they flow.

flow. 'Tis actual Faith *John* means in this Epiſtle, therefore he joyns it with Confeſſion, he lays the Mark upon actual Faith; for that only falls under our diſcerning. God indeed ſees the firſt ſeeds and principles of Grace; but they are known to us only by the ſenſe we have of their powerful actings in us: and therefore I ſhall conſider the regenerating Power of actual Faith, and ſhew how it does diſcover that new birth that came in with a principle of Faith at firſt.——The Regenerating power of Faith, both in the principle and in the act, is very great, it makes a marvellous change in us.——So ſtrong are the impreſſions of Faith, about Chriſt and our everlaſting concernments in him, that we muſt needs be much affected with the diſcovery; which lies in two things:

1. In a convicting knowledg of our ſin and miſery by Nature.

2. In an aſtoniſhing diſcovery of God's Grace and mercy to us in Chriſt.

The Spirit of God demonſtrating both unto us with ſuch clearneſs and evidence, that we cannot but be perſuaded of the truth of them in our own caſe; and being ſo perſuaded, we muſt be concerned about them. Faith draws in the attention of the mind

mind to thoſe things we believe in reference to our ſelves, fixes our thoughts upon them, dwells upon the conſideration of them; there is no evading the ſerious thoughts of Faith, no getting them out of our heads, nor out of our hearts; they lye cloſe, they lye next us, always in our view, *My ſin is ever before me.* Chriſt dwells in our hearts by Faith, we have the whole ſtate of our Souls before us from firſt to laſt; Faith ſhews us where our true intereſt lies, what is of abſolute neceſſity to be done in order to Salvation. We ſee all this in Chriſt, who is God and Man, *made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. In Chriſt we ſee how matters ſtand between God and Man, we ſee all that paſſed between God and Man in order to his recovery; the whole method, way, and manner of our reſtauration from firſt to laſt; we ſee the wages of our Sins, and the price of our Redemption; we ſee the Law and the Goſpel both fulfill'd in Chriſt; God's infinite Juſtice and Mercy highly exalted and glorified in him. 'Tis a pleaſing raviſhing ſight to behold God in Chriſt reconciling the World unto himſelf; to obſerve the myſtery of his manifold hidden wiſdom in carrying on the great work of Man's Redemption;

demption; all this Faith diſcovers to us in ſome measure, filling us with a Holy admiration of God's unſpeakable kindneſs and love to us, provoking us to purſue after the great ends of the Goſpel. How buſie is the Soul? how full of diſcourſe with it ſelf? What ſecret inferences does an enlightned Conſcience draw from what it believes? This believing Jeſus to be the Chriſt, takes in all that belongs to the Perſon of Chriſt, in all his Offices; takes in the whole Doctrine of Chriſt, all his Precepts, all his Promiſes, applies all to the Soul; Thou art the Man ſpoken of, and ſpoken to in the Goſpel; hear, and thy Soul ſhall live. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation; Faith admits of no delays, won't give us one days reſpite from the work it hath cut out for us. So Faith wrought in *Paul*, when Chriſt was revealed in him, immediately he conſulted not with fleſh and blood; Faith changes our Counſels, alters the whole frame of the Soul; the Man is a new Man, born again into a new World, into a new Nature, quite of another ſpirit: This is the Regenerating power of Faith. Let us then judge of the truth of our Faith, by the great change that it always makes in thoſe who are brought out of darkneſs into this marvellous light. Should

Should we ask ſome Profeſſors, what effect their Faith had upon them; whether upon their believing in Chriſt they found themſelves born again, made new creatures? It may be they will ſay, they hope they are the better for believing, that their Faith has not been without ſome good effect. Alas, what a ſlender account is this? how ſhort of a new birth? You may be the ſame Man that ever you were for all this, in the ſame ſtate in which you were firſt born.——Art thou born again? born of God?——Speak to this. Some outward Reformation there may be, where there is no inward *Regeneration*. Haſt thou a new heart? doſt thou lead a new life? is the whole courſe of thy life changed? are all things become new within and without? Faith in Chriſt changes us into the ſame image, transforms us into his likeneſs, lets in the Spirit of Chriſt further and further into the Soul, till we are ſo filled with the Holy Spirit, that there will be at laſt no room for a worldly ſpirit to breathe in us; it will be quite extinct and die away. The more we ſee of this newneſs of ſpirit in any, the more of the new creature appears in them. When the Apoſtle would take off the *Epheſians* from a vain, worldly courſe of life, he ſhews the Ephef 4. 20.

in-

inconſiſtency of ſuch a courſe, with the true knowledg of Chriſt.—You have not ſo learned Chriſt, you have been taught better things by him than to walk as the *Gentiles* do, in the vanity of their mind. Faith in Chriſt works ſo great a change in all the faculties of the Soul, in the underſtanding, will and affections, and in our outward converſation too, that a true Believer may well be ſaid to be born again, from the newneſs of life that appears in him; and to be born of God, from the holineſs, ſpirituality, and heavenly nature of that life which he now lives by Faith in the Son of God.

Till the Regenerating power of Faith do thus appear in us, we have no reaſon to think we are born again.

1 Joh 5.4. 4. *Whoſoever is born of God, overcomes the world*, &c. Πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον, *Omne quod ex Deo genitum eſt.* He uſes the neuter gender to comprehend all ſorts, ſtates and degrees of mankind; he does not ſay, he or ſhe that is born of God, &c. but *whatſoever is born of God*, every Man, Woman and Child, rich or poor, bond or free, whoſoever is born of God, has power and ſtrength from Chriſt, to overcome the World; they are aſſured of the Victory at their firſt ſetting out, *becauſe greater is he that*

that is in them, than he that is in the World. They know they are of the ſtrongeſt ſide, Chriſt has overcome the World already in his own Perſon, and will not fail to conquer it in and by the Saints; he will appear ſo great in them, that the whole World ſhall not be able to ſtand before them. *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*, and you in me have overcome it; and by me you ſhall perſonally overcome it your ſelves. 1 Joh. 4 4. Joh. 16. 33.

I prove this to be an evidence of *Regeneration* thus.

That which overcomes the World, muſt be of a higher extraction, of a more noble deſcent than the World it ſelf in its preſent corrupt ſtate; it muſt be ſomething diſtinct from the World, and above it, whatever is born of the Fleſh is but Fleſh, falls in with the World to which it belongs, and of which it is a part: but God having choſen ſome out of the World, and called them to a Heavenly Life, has promiſed to give them a Heavenly Nature, to beget them again unto himſelf, to put his own Spirit into them, that they may walk as New Creatures, who are not of the World though they live in it; they are Born of God, do bear his image, their hearts are moulded into the belief of his word, they

can do nothing againſt the truth, but every thing for the truth; theſe are they who overcome the World, the men of the world, and the Things of the World; the Spirit & Principles of the World, the Fears and Hopes of the World, the Luſts and Pleaſures, and Temptations of the World, they are dead to all theſe, not moved by them, but do ſteer their courſe by a higher light let down from heaven into their hearts; and this is their Victory, even their Faith; they have nothing to oppoſe againſt the World and all things in it that may diſquiet and diſcompoſe their Spirits, but their Faith, and
Heb. 4. 3. by believing, they enter into reſt; all who are Born of God do thus live by Faith here below; they conſult not with Fleſh and Blood, their affections are ſuited to the apprehenſions of their Faith, they are filled with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory; by believing they ſee good days a coming, when all Tears ſhall be wiped from their Eyes, they wait patiently till then, rejoycing in the hope of the Glory of God. Till we get into this frame, walking in the evidence of things not ſeen, we ſhall never overcome the World; for the things that are ſeen, conceive them in what ſhape or poſture you pleaſe, have their emptineſs and vanity in them, will never ſatisfy;

ſy; they are but finite and temporal; the preſent Faſhion of this World, be it what it will, paſſes away into ſomething elſe, while we are a beholding it; all things here below moulder and crumble away in our hands, periſh in the uſing, are always the worſe for wearing, which ſhews they cannot laſt long; when they are in their beſt ſtate they are altogether vanity; the higheſt degree of Perfection in the Creature, tends to corruption, and indeed diſpoſes to it; 'tis as Natural to Die as to be Born, there is an ἀκμὴ a turning point, that ſtops the further growth of the Creature, and makes it to decline ever after, till its fading Glory be quite extinguiſh'd; therefore labour not for the meat that periſhes, but for that which nouriſhes unto Everlaſting Life. Till we come to Live upon Eternal unſeen things, we live but meanly, in the midſt of our Earthly ſufficiencies we are in ſtraights, ſtill wanting ſomething till Chriſt be ours, and then all is ours. There is no room left then for any further deſigns, in him we have plenary ſatisfaction and perfect reſt, we ſhall never have true hearts eaſe till then. But the difficulty lies in bringing over our hearts to this Newneſs of Life, to this Noble Life of Faith, that fetches all its Comforts from Heaven, caſting up its an-

chor within the Vail, which is sure and stedfast; Flesh and Blood cannot do this, there is nothing in Nature that disposes us to it, therefore we must be born again, be made New Creatures, before we shall savour the things of Heaven; and such is the power of Religion upon the minds of men, where it is in truth, that it always works this change in them; they find it, and feel it in themselves. Whether it be so with us, whether we have any certain experience of such a thing in our own Souls, we should do well to consider that even upon our knees, and give God no rest day nor night, till we see some better symptoms of Eternal Life in our selves; we may judge of our life whether it be Eternal or no, by the things we live in, and live upon; they who are of the Earth, are Earthly, they who are born from above, are heavenly, to be carnally minded is death, but to be Spiritually minded is life and peace; The inward frame of the mind discovers what kind of Creatures we are, whether old or new, flesh or spirit; the issues of life are from the Heart; as the pulse of your Souls beats upwards or downwards, so you may judge of your state, as you find your selves most concerned in things above or things below; till you have got above the world, and have overcome it, you are not born again.

Prov. 4. 23.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, *Every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God.* That which is intended here, is, 5. 1 Joh. 4. 7. 1 Joh. 5. 1. John 13. 34. 35. 1 Pet. 1. 22. verſ. 23.

Firſt, Love to the Saints as ſuch. Unfeigned love of the Brethren is a ſign of a pure heart, and that we are indeed *born again.*

Secondly, Love to all men; 'tis due to all; *Owe no man any thing, but love*; that, we owe to all; every man may challenge it; every man is our Neighbour in that ſenſe, to be the object of our Love; we muſt extend it to our very Enemies; 'tis the fulfilling of the Law; the duty of man to man, preſcribed in the Second Table, cannot be performed without it. Rom. 13. 8.

—— Love is above all Illumination and Knowledge; a more ſure mark of *Regeneration: He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* 1 John 4. 16.

Love is one of the communicable Attributes of God, *ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt*; we are followers of God, when we walk in love. Rom. 5. 5. Eph. 5. 1.

Common Profeſſors have ſome love one to another; but if you trace it up to its original, you'll find it a ſelfiſh, mercenary love, in which they rather reſpect themſelves than Chriſt; 'tis not for his ſake, but for ſome outward reſpects of relation, neighbourhood, or uſefulneſs in the common concerns of this life; it may be for

their agreement in opinion about ſome lower matters of Religion; this is but the friendſhip of the World, and may be conſiſtent with real enmity againſt God and good men as ſuch; but perfect love, *i.e.* real, ſincere, Chriſtian Love, is for God's ſake, becauſe he has ſo loved us, and given us *a new Command, to love one another.* There is no true love among men, till we are born again. He exhorts thoſe who have put off the old man, and are renewed in ſpirit, to put away all bitterneſs, wrath, *&c.* Before *Regeneration*, we are *fooliſh, diſobedient, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another: Biting, devouring, conſuming one another.* It looks rather like a deſcription of Wild Beaſts than men, ſo ſavage and fierce are we by nature; nothing but a ſpirit of *Regeneration* will ſweeten and mollify the hearts of men; that which unites us to Chriſt, unites us one to another; we are all one in Chriſt, but we ſhall never be all one among our ſelves, till we are united to Chriſt; then the Peace of God rules in our hearts, to which *we are called in one body.* There is no true good nature among men, but what flows from Grace; Sin hath ſo poyſoned and ſowred man's Nature, that till that Serpentine Venom be purged out, and a better Spirit be put into us, there will

Jam. 4. 4.
1 John 4. 12.
Joh 13. 34.
Vide Eph. 4. 23. compared with verſe 31, 32.
Tit. 3. 3.
Gal. 5. 15.
Col. 3. 15.
Joh. 17. 21, 22, 23.

will be little harmony or concord among men. Having put on the new man, *put on therefore as the elect of God*, &c. Vide *Loc.* Col. 3. 8, 13. Were this mark of *Regeneration* more viſible in our days, it would be a token for good, of a more effectual work of the Goſpel among us, than for ought I ſee does yet appear. Hatred, variance, *&c.* are reckoned up among the Works of the Fleſh, as directly oppoſite to the Fruits of the Spirit. Gal. 5. 19, *&c.* I will ſhew how this loving diſpoſition ariſes out of *Regeneration*; that the fundamental ground of it is our conformity to Chriſt, which neceſſarily follows upon our *Regeneration*: Chriſt is the expreſs Image of his Father; the Saints are in their finite capacities, the expreſs Image of Chriſt, in whom they ſee the Father, who as God, is one with the Son; whilſt they behold the Son as God-man, they ſee their humane Nature hypoſtatically united to the Divine; they ſee their humane perſons joined to the Lord in one Spirit.

I doubt not but the ſpiritual glorified Body of Chriſt is the medium of the beatifical Viſion to Angels and Saints above; the Godhead ſhines through it in all its brightneſs, as the Sun ſhines through pure Chryſtal; ſhines upon it, ſhines into it, fills every part with light; there is nothing to obumbrate

or shade it, it transmits the light to us with advantage.

The Bodies of the Saints at the Resurrection being freed from all mortality, and natural weakness, being then immortal, spiritual Bodies, like unto that glorious Body of Christ, they are capable of receiving this reflected glory from Jesus Christ; they have a nearer and more inward view of God in Christ than the Angels have, because they see him in their own nature face to face, and nothing between, the Glory of God shines out upon them in the Face of Christ; thus are they made light in the Lord, being changed into the same Image by the Spirit of the Lord.—— What is thus done unto perfection upon the Bodies and Souls of glorified Saints at the Resurrection, is really done in some degree upon the Souls of the Saints in this life; the Image of God in all his communicable Attributes is impressed upon them; they partake of his Holiness, Wisdom, Goodness, Love; are merciful, as their heavenly Father is merciful; and cannot but express something of all this, as they are new Creatures, holding forth the Image of the heavenly *Adam*, which carries them out to a love and liking of it self, in whomsoever it appears: therefore he who says he loves God, and hates his Image in another,

another, is a liar. Thoſe who know God in Chriſt, will be ſure to take notice of his Image in the Saints; God in Chriſt is the Object of our worſhip, and Chriſt in the Saints is the Object of our endeared love and affection; God is inviſible, we ſee him not; it muſt be pure faith that keeps up love to God; but Chriſt in the Saints is more viſible to us; here, we have ſomething to help our faith, and to draw out our love; we ſee the Children of God, we converſe with them, we may lay our hands upon them, and embrace them; God allows us to beſtow our love to him upon his Saints, 'tis ſtill to him, when ſhewed to them for his ſake; *As much as you do it to one of theſe, you do it to me.* 1 Joh. 4. 20. 1 Pet. 2. 2.

Sixthly, To *deſire the milk of the word.* As a new-born Child does naturally deſire the Breaſt of the Mother, ſo a new-born Soul does as naturally take the breaſt of the Word. God, as he is *Jehovah*, is the Fountain of being to all things that are: and as He is the Everlaſting God, He is the Fountain of life to every living Creature; *In him we live, move, and have our being*: all things do ſubſiſt in him, and by him; He ſupports the whole Creation, which he raiſed out of nothing; *For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.* 6. Rom. 11. 36.

There is a Creature life, which is but a Creature,

creature; and an uncreated and eternal life, which is God himself.

A Creature life is either of Spirits or Animals; of things incorporeal, or corporeal. How immaterial spirits are maintained in their created natural living beings, we must leave to God that made them; only this I may say, that the Eternal life of the Elect Angels in which they were created, and confirmed by Christ, differs from that eternal life which Believers have in Christ; the one is a creature life, or a created life; it once was not, tho it shall never have an end; the other is the Eternal Life of God himself communicated in time, and in some degree to his creature Man, which makes him a new creature, taken into the Eternal Life of God himself, according to man's finite capacity.

All sublunary living creatures have their proper nourishment assigned them by the Providence of God; they all live upon their fellow creatures, and have their food suited to their several kinds, which by a natural appetite they are carried out unto; Man who has the dominion over the creature, has his choice of every thing made for food; but the new man, or the new creature, being born of God, united to God in Christ, and quickned by his Eternal Spirit entring into him, has Eternal Life continually communicated

municated to him from Chriſt the ſecond *Adam*, who is a quickning ſpirit, dwelling always in the Saints. If it be asked, what is the *Patulum vitæ*, to the Saints, as they are new creatures; I anſwer, they have meat to eat that the World knows not of, *hidden Manna*, ſecret communications from Chriſt, who is their life; and becauſe they have not an immediate fruition of him here, therefore they are commanded to feed upon Chriſt by Faith in the Word, and to gather up the Heavenly *Manna* they meet with there. Faith knows how to live upon God in the Word, till the Soul can have a nearer acceſs to him by viſion above, face to face; then we have life more abundantly, are even ſwallowed up of life, are all life, without any ſymptomes of mortality about us: then that life and immortality which the Goſpel has brought to light, will more fully appear, and be made manifeſt in all glorified Saints.

APPLICATION.

You have heard the Doctrinal part, what *Regeneration* is, the neceſſity of it, what are the ſigns of it. The next thing to be conſidered is, whether you and I are regenerated, and do feel any ſymptoms of this new birth in our ſelves? If not, the Text does plainly

plainly conclude againſt us, that we can't ſee the Kingdom of God. If theſe marks, if all theſe Scripture marks be not found in you, and upon you, it is becauſe there is no life in you. Shew me but one of theſe marks, and I'll ſhew you all the reſt in that one, at leaſt make it evident to diſcerning Chriſtians, that they are all comprehended in that one, which you ſee and own in your ſelves. I have been ſearching you from head to foot, feeling for life in every part, and 'tis well if we can find it in any part: O how dead, how cold, how wan, how earthy are many Profeſſors under all their forms, like a Carcaſs ſtretched out and ſtiff, no breath, no motion, no heat, laid out for the Grave, free among the dead, unconcern'd in all the myſteries of the Goſpel: The reaſon of our miſtakes about *Regeneration*, is becauſe we don't look for ſo great an inward change in our ſelves as we ought to do.

We are more given to contemplation than practiſe; grown ſo purely ſpeculative in Religion, that we are no further concerned in our own notions, than to maintain and defend our Opinions againſt all others of a contrary ſentiment; and this has filled the World with diſputes, and ſet us all a wrangling one with another; every one

one thinks he is in the right. When Scripture and Reason are against a Man, that Man is under a temptation to be against both; so fond are we of our own Tenents, even when we put darkness for light, and evil for good, things must be as we have put them. At this rate the truth and power of Religion will quickly be lost amongst us, unless both be better exemplified in our Lives and Conversations.

The Gospel is set before us as a new mould into which we our selves must be cast, it comes to work a great change in us, not of our opinions only, but of our Hearts and Nature, to create us again in Christ Jesus unto good works; Is this done? where this is not done, that man's pretended interest in Religion will deceive him, and come to nothing. You may be of this or that Persuasion, of this or that Party, have excellent notions of Divine things in your heads, and yet not have one tittle of the truth writ upon your hearts. I don't ask what you hold, or what you profess, or what you know, but what you are, what Newness of Spirit do you find in your selves? My Text speaks of something to be done in you, and upon you, Is that done? Art thou born again? Art thou a new creature? I speak the Language of God to you, a new creature is that which

you

you muſt be before you die, elſe you'l be undone for ever; it concerns you to look what that is, do you look to that; A new creature you muſt be, elſe you periſh eternally: better you had never been born, if you are not born again before you die. Let not the ſtrangeneſs of the expreſſion, nor the myſtery of the thing it ſelf, take you off from ſeeking after this *Regeneration* in the Text; 'tis ſomething muſt be wrought in you, you need not go further than your own ſelves for a proof of it; let every one view his own heart well, wait for a change there, carry thy old, carnal, unbelieving heart to God, and ſay, Lord create in me a clean heart; take away this heart of Stone; I lay it down at thy feet, I dare not take it back again, I dare not go from thee in my old ſinful corrupt nature: O let thy creating power paſs upon me this inſtant, that I may become a new creature. Did we come with raiſed expectations of ſuch a work, we ſhould ſee the Glory of God in ſome inward aſtoniſhing effects of his mighty power upon our hearts: He that commands light to ſhine out of darkneſs, and calls things that are not as tho they were, gives them a being by his creating power. Things that are not, do anſwer to this call of God, as if they had been there before; they

they come forth out of their own nothingneſs, deriving a real being and exiſtence from the operative Word of the Lord; he ſpeaks, and it is done: So able is God to raiſe up Children unto *Abraham*, even out of Stones; a Stone may as ſoon turn it ſelf into a living creature, as a natural Man turn himſelf into a new creature; only there is this difference, a Stone has no ſenſe to perceive any ſuch change brought upon it, but a natural Man has; he is a living Soul; and when converting Grace comes upon a Man living in ſin, to turn him from it, he muſt needs feel the oppoſition that is made to the whole courſe of his corrupt nature; the conflict that is between two living contrary principles is felt on both ſides; Sin feels it, and Grace feels it; the Fleſh luſts againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh; the Fleſh is hindred from doing all the evil it would do, and the Spirit from doing all the good it would do; they retard each others motions; one pulls one way, and the other another; theſe two are contrary, they never agree in any thing. A ſinner finds himſelf dying to ſin, under the quickning regenerating influence of the Spirit of God; though corrupt nature perceives not the beauty and glory of Grace, yet it ſees and feels the contrariety of Grace

Grace to it self, and is full of enmity against it; as the Spirit of God does assist our dying graces, so the Devil, that evil spirit, does what he can to keep alive our dying sins; he would fain prevent the utter mortification of sin in Believers, if it were possible. You see what striving and struggling there is in every regenerate Soul, two living men contending with each other, the old man and the new; there is a mighty strength in the old man, but the new man is stronger than he, enters in upon him by an irresistible force, binds him, and at last casts him quite out. Let us either throw away our *Bibles*, and resolve never to look into them more, or else submit to the judgment of the Scriptures in so great a Case as this is. —*Verily, Verily*, &c.

THE END.

A

DISCOURSE

OF

FAITH,

IN TWO

POINTS:

VIZ.

I. How Faith comes by Hearing.
II. How we are Juſtified by Faith.

By Thomas Cole *Miniſter of the Goſpel.*

LONDON,
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A DISCOURSE OF FAITH.

ROM. 10. 17.

So then, Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

THE Apoſtle towards the cloſe of the Ninth Chapter ſpeaking of a twofold Righteouſneſs, of Works and of Faith, tells us that the *Gentiles* did attain to the Righteouſneſs of Faith, but the *Jews* did not attain to the Righteouſneſs of Works, which they ſo much truſted in, *for they being ignorant of Gods Righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own, have not ſubmitted themſelves to the Righteouſneſs of God*, Rom. 10. 3. Hence

the Apostle takes an occasion to compare the Righteousness of the Law, with that of Faith; calling one our own Righteousness, the other the Righteousness of God, which the Law do's tacitly point to, promising Life to perfect Obedience, this not being found in any mere Man since the Fall, we are directed to seek it in Christ, who is the end of the Law to every one who believes, *ver.* 4. he brings in *Moses*, *verse* the 5th. describing the Righteousness which is of the Law, that *the man which doth those things shall live by them.* Such doers of the Law we are not, therefore can look for nothing but Death by Law.

Verse 6th. He brings in the Righteousness of Faith by a *Prosopopeia*, speaking it self to an affrighted dejected sinner, who is also brought in musing upon his wretched Condition, full of sad thoughts, saying over many dismal things to himself in his own Heart about his Eternal State, how shall I get to Heaven, how shall I escape Hell, how shall I dwell with everlasting Burnings which I see no way to avoid by Law, the righteousness of Faith meets this convinced Sinner, in this great distress of Conscience, communes with him, discourses of Christ to him, minds him of his

his Reſurrection from the dead, and Aſcenſion into Heaven, you ſeem (ſays the Righteouſneſs of Faith) to deny both in talking at this rate, your way to Heaven is plain, Chriſt is aſcended, you ſhall as ſurely go to Heaven, if you believe as Chriſt is gone before you, as ſurely eſcape Hell and overcome Death, as Chriſt is riſen from the dead, and the only way to get an Intereſt in Chriſt is to attend to the word of Faith that is preached, *ver.* 8. when once that prevails and brings you to confeſs with your mouth the Lord Jeſus and believe in your heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, you ſhall be ſaved *ver.* 9. this proved out of *Iſa.* 28. 16. *Whoſoever believes on him ſhall not be aſhamed, whether Jew or Gentile, ver.* 11, 12. and becauſe Prayer is the principal part of that outward Confeſſion made with the Mouth, and the beſt indication of Faith in the Heart, he concludes *ver.* 13. *Whoſoever ſhall call upon the name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved.* Whence Obſerve;

Obſerv. *The chiefeſt thing we ſhould now pray for, is, that we may have an Intereſt in Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs, deſiring to be found in him,* &c.

Having ſpoken ſo much of the Righteouſneſs of Faith, he does in a certain gradation ſhew the way and means of attaining it, it is not a Righteouſneſs that is to be done by us, to be wrought out with our own hands, but prepared for us by another, freely promiſed and given to us, therefore it muſt be askt, it muſt be earneſtly pray'd for, we muſt beg hard of God to impute it to us, *v.* 13. the Law propounds the work of Righteouſneſs to be done by us, the Goſpel (*Rom.* 5. 17.) propounds the Gift of Righteouſneſs to be pray'd for and thankfully received, *v.* 14. there can be no Prayer without Faith, no Faith without Hearing, no Hearing without a Preacher, no Preachers unleſs they be ſent, from all which he draws this Concluſion, *viz.* that the next immediate Cauſe of Faith is Hearing.

There is much Preaching and much Hearing in this City, but what comes on't? Truely if Faith does not come, nothing comes that will turn to any good Account to you: The Apoſtles in the Primitive times ſo ſpake that many believed, *Act.* 14. 1. with that evidence and power, their words had a ſpecial Accent in the Ears and Hearts of thoſe that heard them, God gave a ſignal teſtimony to the word of his Grace, than fear came upon every Soul, *Act.* 2. 43.

2. 43. Thoſe who were not ſavingly wrought upon, were greatly aſtoniſhed at the Doctrine of the Goſpel; 'tis otherwiſe now, how little of this aſtoniſhment does appear in our Aſſemblies, where is this fear that came upon every Soul, 'twas ſhort of Faith, yet I am perſwaded when Faith comes in ſome open eminent Converſion, that the whole Aſſembly is uſually ſtruck with ſome preſent fear, the Word comes like a mighty ruſhing Wind into the Congregation, ſhakes all, when 'tis about to Convert one; ſomething like this may be obſerved in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, and other paſſages in the New Teſtament, it is fit that Grace ſhould be ſolemnly attended when it goes forth to the publick Converſion though but of one Soul: If God intend the coming of Faith into any of your hearts this day, he'l come along with his Work, he will prepare the way, he'l bleſs your hearing, and ſpeak ſomething inwardly to you from himſelf, that ſhall incline your hearts to believe the Goſpel, though God ſpeaks by the Miniſtry of man, yet his voice is diſtinct from ours, and begins where that ends, carrying the Word from the Ear to the Heart, there leaving it under thoſe mixtures of Faith that make it work effectu-

ally. Hear I beſeech you with diligence leaſt you obſtruct the coming of Faith by not attending to what ſhall be ſpoken to you in the name of the Lord. *So then faith cometh by hearing*, &c.

Doct. *Hearing the Word of God Preached to us, is the ordinary means of begetting faith in us.*

Firſt, What are we in a more ſpecial manner to underſtand by Faith here in the Text.

The general Object of Faith is the whole Doctrine of God laid down in the Scriptures; the ſpecial object of Saving Faith, is the Free-promiſe of Grace in Chriſt Jeſus, this ſupports the former, we muſt believe the Divine Narrative of the whole Will of God revealed in the Bible, before we can pitch our Faith in any ſuitable actings upon any part of it, 'tis one thing to aſſent to the Truth of the Word in General, a further and indeed another thing to apply the Promiſes; he believes a Promiſe who do's fiducially rely upon it, this is properly Truſting, we believe ſomething in reference to our ſelves, living in a comfortable Hope and Expectation of it, reſpecting not only the Truth of the

the thing, but alſo the Goodneſs of it in reference to our ſelves under that poſſibility, probability or certainty of obtaining it, which our Faith, according to its various Degrees may repreſent unto us, Faith in the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt for juſtification is here principally intended.

Secondly, Why muſt this Faith come by hearing. Hearing is alwayes antecedent to Faith, though Faith be not always the conſequent of Hearing, *ver.* 16. 18. all Hearers are not believers, though all Believers are firſt Hearers.

I ſhall evince the neceſſity of Hearing in order to Faith, from theſe following grounds:

I. *Hearing* is *Senſus Diſciplinæ*, the Senſe by which all Knowledge is let into the Soul. There is a two-fold Knowledge belonging to Faith, one leading to it, the other found in it, ariſing from it, and is the ſame with Faith it ſelf.

The Firſt, is Litteral or Hiſtorical, 'tis rather *notitia* then *cognitio*, a notice or particular information given us of the Contents of the Bible, eſpecially of the report which the Goſpel makes of the way of Salvation by Chriſt, we muſt know,

know what we are to believe, before we can be ſuppoſed to believe any thing; *How ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how ſhall they hear without a Preacher.* Words are the proper Object of this Senſe of Hearing, where nothing is ſpoken, nothing can be heard, the ſound of Words muſt reach the ear, before the ſenſe of thoſe Words can enter into the Underſtanding. This Hiſtorical Knowledge do's not lye in Learning the Scriptures by roat, without any Rational Knowledge of the Litteral Senſe and Meaning of thoſe Propoſitions of Truth that are contained therein, this would be only Memory without any Underſtanding: A Natural Man does not diſ-believe the Scripture, becauſe he has not a Rational Conception of the common Notion of things ſpoken of there, but becauſe he has, and finding them ſo uncouth, ſo ſeemingly contrary to Humane Reaſon, he rejects them as Fooliſhneſs.

The Second, Is a Knowledge more than Hiſtorical, and is of the Eſſence of Faith all one with it, it is that which we call a Saving Knowledge; it lies in the Uſe and Application of Goſpel Truths to our own Souls, when we ſhape our ſelves to a real

real Conformity to the Call of God in every Goſpel Truth, acting in a way of Duty what the Word of God commands.

There is no Saving Knowledge of Goſpel Truths, but the Knowledge of Faith, and no other Reaſon for Faith in the higheſt Miſteries of the Goſpel, but the bare Word of God.

That Faith is Knowledge, I prove thus, Becauſe in Scripture, 'tis oppoſed to Folly, Blindneſs and Ignorance, *Acts* 17. 23, 30. *Joh.* 17. 3. *Jer.* 31. 34. *Iſa.* 9. 1, 2.

Beſides it has all the effects of Knowledge in the Soul, it gives full ſatisfaction to the Mind of a Man, removes all doubts, eſtabliſhes the Heart in a full perſwaſion of the Truth of the Word of God; Humane Knowledge is liable to many Miſtakes but a Divine Faith admits of no Falſhood, therefore Faith perfects mans Underſtanding, becauſe it brings in nothing but Truth, no mans Errors do proceed from Faith, he may err in matters of Faith, but 'tis not from his Faith, but his Unbelief, therefore Faith is Knowledge, unerring Knowledge we believe and are ſure, we may be ſo, if we rightly underſtand our ſelves in an act

act of Believing, no demonſtrations of Reaſon, do give that Evidence of Truth as Faith do's, as mans Underſtanding is too low, to take in Divine Truths, ſo Gods Underſtanding is too high, for man to comprehend, therefore we are called to yield the obedience of faith to his revealed Will, God governs man rather by giving him the knowledge of his Will, then lifting him up into his own Infinite Underſtanding, that is above our Capacity, our Duty lies not in knowing what God knows, but in doing what God commands, who gives no account of his matters to us, only commands us to believe his Word, and to look upon that as a ſufficient ground and reaſon of our faith, when we hear it preached to us.

II. *Becauſe* God has appointed hearing the Word, as a neceſſary means of faith, he will not immediately ſpeak to our hearts by his Spirit, but has appointed his Word to be firſt ſpoken to our Ears, and promis'd that way to let it down into our hearts, thus *Faith comes by Hearing.*

Queſt. How ſhould Hearing of things above our Reaſon contribute any thing to our believing them? One would think the

the oftner we hear them, the more abſurd we ſhould count them to be, and reject them with greater Indignation, having ſo often tried them by the Touchſtone of our own reaſon, and pronounced them unintelligible.

Anſw. Hearing alone will not let in theſe Divine Myſteries into our Underſtandings, *Iſa.* 6. 9, 10. God muſt inwardly Teach us and reveal them to us by his Spirit, before we can believe them, which brings me to the third head, *viz.*

III. How faith is wrought by our hearing the Word.

1. By a ſpecial Appearance of God to the Soul.

2. By opening the Heart, enlightning the Mind, and perſwading the Will to a thorough cloſure with Chriſt upon Goſpel Terms.

To theſe two heads may be referred all that falls under our diſcerning and experience of the work of the Spirit in begetting faith in us.

1. Faith is wrought by a ſpecial appearance

rance of God to the Soul, what this appearance of God is, how it riſes out of the Word, in what manner 'tis let into the Soul, I ſhall endeavour to open to the experience of thoſe who know what it is to hold Communion with God in hearing his Word : there is ſome co-incidence in the particulars above-mentioned, yet not without ſome diſtinction, which I leave to your own obſervation, the leſs of Art or Method there is in handling experimental points, the better, they come with moſt power to the Conſcience in their own ſimplicity, therefore I ſhall in a joynt Diſcourſe run the matter cloſe together, looking ſometimes on one ſide, and ſometimes on t'other, till I have viewed it round, that I may preſent the whole Truth to you in ſo great and neceſſary a point, we can have no ſaving knowledge of God but in and by his word, we muſt look through that Glaſs upon him, and that appearance of God we meet with there, is the beginning of all Religion, the Word never comes with power to our Conſciences, till God appear in it.

How that is, I am now to ſhew. Whilſt we are hearing his Word we ſee God ſtanding forth, in his own words, declaring

ing himſelf to be the Author of it, this draws in our attention, adds that weight and authority to the Word, that we cannot but receive it as the Word of God, and ſet our Seals to the Truth of it, we ſee ſufficient grounds for our Faith in God from this manifeſtation of himſelf to our Souls. Thus God wrought faith in *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 1. by appearing to him ſeveral times as God Almighty and All-ſufficient, that *Abraham* might not doubt of any thing that ſuch a God ſhould promiſe to him, and therefore 'tis ſaid *Rom.* 4. 3. that *Abraham* believed God, being fully perſwaded that what he had promiſed he was able to perform, *ver.* 21. Thus God appeared to *Samuel* revealing himſelf to him by his Word 1 *Sam.* 3. 21. So Chriſt appeared to *Paul* by a voice, and a Light from Heaven, I am Jeſus, *Acts* 9. there are ſpiritual appearances of God now to our Souls under the Preaching of the Goſpel anſwerable to theſe Viſions of Old. God lets himſelf down into our Hearts, through the apprehenſions of our faith, which frames in our hearts a right image of God anſwerable to that Character he gives of himſelf in the Word, he ſhines through the Word in all his Glory, when he ſpake of Old to the Patriarchs

triarchs by an articulate voice, the unwritten word then was accompanied with ſuch convincing ſigns of his Preſence, that they could not but believe it, and ſo is the written Word now as capable of repreſenting God to us, when he has a mind to be ſeen by us, as that was then; the Letter of the Word is but a Creature, but the Truths contained in it are Eternal, and do all center in God himſelf, who is the Eſſential Word, thus God riſes out of the Word, and looks a man in the Face, tells him, thus ſaith the Lord, I am that Lord God Almighty who now ſpeaks unto you, he leaves no Objection unanſwered, ſhews what ſure grounds of faith, we have in him, ſhall God ſay and not do? 'tis impoſſible for God to lie, it muſt be ſo as God ſaies, it can't be otherwiſe, Heaven and Earth ſhall ſooner paſs away than one Tittle of the Word be broken, thus in God we praiſe his Word, *Pſal.* 56. 4. 10. Conſider the Word out of God: 'twill puzzle Men and Angels to make out the meaning of it, to think the things ſpoken of poſſible or likely to come to paſs, but all things are poſſible with God, and to thoſe who believe in God, they ſtick at nothing, they are ſure Omnipotency knows no difficulties, the Counſel of the Lord muſt ſtand,

ſtand, his thoughts ſhall come to paſs: a Soul thus ſtruck with a ſenſe of Gods Preſence yields immediately, I believe Lord with all my heart, am ready to do whatever thou requireſt of me, ſo *Paul*: Oh that God would ſo manifeſt himſelf to every one of your hearts this day, that he would ſhew himſelf, come up cloſe to you, look you in the face, and ſay, I am Jeſus, you could not withſtand this mighty preſence of God in Chriſt Jeſus, O ſpeak Lord, 'tis but thy ſaying to each of us I am Jeſus, and we ſhall all be made to know the Lord from the leaſt to the greateſt, I hope the quickning voice of the Son of God, is now ſounding in the Ears of your Faith, while I am ſpeaking to you, and that you do receive the Word, not as the word of Man, but as it is indeed the Word of God, quick and powerful, ſharper than a two-edged Sword in every one of your hearts.

The knowledge of the Truth as 'tis in Jeſus (*Eph.* 4. 21.) is one thing, and the knowledge of the Truth as 'tis in Ink and Paper is another; they are the ſame Truths, but as they are in the Scriptures they lie in the dead Letter, as they are in Chriſt they are ſeen in their living root

and principle from whence they ſpring, meer Scriptural Knowledge is but Hiſtorical, we look upon the things we read and hear, rather as notions than realities: till God fills up all expreſſions of Scripture concerning himſelf, with a Divine Preſence anſwerable thereunto, we believe nothing that is ſaid of him, but ſuch a preſence of God in his Word, captivates our hearts to the belief of it, we muſt believe him to be ſuch a God as the Word declares him to be, before we ſhall count all his ſayings true, we muſt fetch ſtrength from the name of God, *Rev.* 2. 13. to ſupport our Faith in all its actings upon any part of his revealed will, and we never deny any Truth plainly revealed but we deny his name, *Rev.* 3. 8. and queſtion his Attributes; ſome Truths bare more upon one Attribute, ſome more upon another, but all are founded in God and in the eſſential properties of his Nature, from whence they have their verification and accompliſhment, ſo that till God appear and ſhew himſelf to the Soul, all that is ſaid to us out of the Scriptures in the name of an unknown God affects us not, becauſe it wants that which is the ground of its Credibility, no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 12. 3. he cannot

cannot ſay ſo and think ſo, he cannot ſay ſo and believe what he ſays, till the Father reveal his Son in him, *Paul* by the Light of that Revelation of Chriſt in him, knew all Goſpel Myſteries, and without ſuch an inward ſpiritual manifeſtation of God to our Souls, giving us a ſight of him who is inviſible, 'tis impoſſible we ſhould ever be throughly convinced of the Divinity of the Scriptures, all Divinity ſprings from God, leads to him, nay it looks him directly in the Face, and can't be conſidered apart from him, there is but one God and one Faith, God muſt be in the view of our Faith whenſoever we really act it.

Neither can we have that inward teſtimony of the Spirit convincing us of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, without this ſpecial Appearance of God in the Soul as a witneſs to the Truth of his Word.

While we are hearing the Word, God has inviſible wayes of acceſs to our hearts, he conveys himſelf through his Truth to our Souls, his Divinity leads the way, without ſome appearance of this, the contents of the Word would have no place

in our hearts, but coming with ſo great a preſence, in ſo great a name, and with ſo ſtrong an impreſſion, God himſelf writing them upon the heart, we cannot but receive his Teſtimony, the Word comes into our Hearts ſuddenly before we are aware, and ſeiſes them for God, we cannot but think, ſpeak, act and judge as God does, the ſenſe of the Word is the ſenſe of our Souls, ſo far as the Word is written in our hearts, we read it without the leaſt variation, the Copy anſwers the Original: Hence ariſes that habitual diſpoſition or inclination to believe, God creates this new heart, I ſay this infuſed habit or principle of faith, is antecedent to all acts of faith put forth by us, and is in it ſelf the ſole act of God upon us in our firſt Converſion, it is from this ſupernatural principle thus infuſed, that the natural powers and faculties of the Soul of Man, *viz.* the Underſtanding and the Will, are enabled to take in things purely Spiritual and Divine, Nature never acts above its ſphere, thoſe inbred common Notions that are the Standards and Meaſures of Natural Truths in all their conſequences will never lead us to grant, or admit that which is ſupernatural, when we do this, 'tis always from ſome higher

higher Principle; when we ſee men acting above themſelves, we may conclude they are acted by ſomething higher than themſelves, which is the Spirit of Chriſt dwelling in them.

This ſpecial Appearance of God, with thoſe inward effects of it upon the Soul which I have been ſpeaking of, may be known to Believers, they diſcern it in others, *Acts* 11. 17, 18. and do when they give a true reaſon of their faith, ſee it in themſelves, that all ſprings from the Fathers revealing his Son in them, they can give no other reaſon why they believe in Jeſus, 'tis God that opens the door of Faith and makes it effectual, *Acts* 14.27.

We are apt to be taken with any appearance of Man in a Sermon, this we look after, what words of Mans Wiſdom, how Man acquits himſelf in reaſoning of this or that Point. 'Tis true there is ſome skill required in Planting, and Watering, but all the encreaſe comes from God, your Faith conſiſts not in the Wiſdom of Man but in the power of God, if God himſelf do not appear as a witneſs to his own Truth, as the great undertaker of all that he has promiſed, what we ſay will prevail

little, your faith must terminate in God himself, and in that Ability that is in him to perform his word, this was the ground of *Abrahams* faith, *Paul* knew him whom he believed, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. and so must you if ever you believe to the saving of your Souls. Did you go out of the Congregation after every Sermon you hear under a sight and sense of this appearance of God in his Word, speaking to you from Heaven and shewing himself to your souls in some spiritual resemblance suited and adapted to that Word you are hearing, how could you reject such a Word, so full of God, so exactly corresponding to what you see in God himself, you must yield and cry out each of you, who am I that I should withstand God?

This is the first way that God takes to work Faith in us, by our hearing the Word Preached to us.

Secondly, Faith is wrought by opening the heart, enlightning the mind, and perswading the will to a through closure with Christ upon Gospel Terms.

I shall now shew you how God thus appearing to us in hearing the Word, does open the heart, enlighten the mind and

and throughly perſwade the will, to a through cloſure with Chriſt upon Goſpel Terms.

Naturally our hearts are ſhut up againſt the Goſpel, our Minds are blinded 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. till God ſhines into our hearts, to give the light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, *ver.* 6. Enlightning the eyes of our Underſtandings, *Eph.* 1. 17, 18.

Queſt. What is this Light of Faith, and how does it differ from the Light of Reaſon?

Anſw. The Light of Reaſon lies in the evidence of the thing it ſelf, as it falls under a Humane Underſtanding, arguing from the cauſe to the effect, drawing certain concluſions from undeniable premiſes, granted and acknowledged by all men to be Truths in Nature: Upon ſuch Conceſſions they build all their acquired Knowledge, and do put the ſtamp of Truth upon all fair inferences from thence, which they judge agreeable to thoſe firſt principles and notions of Truth, that paſs for currant under that name among credulous men, who do but think they know,

and do rather ghess than judge: so great is the uncertainty of all humane Knowledge, we have little cause to glory in it.

The light of Faith lies in the infallible certainty of Divine Testimony, faith sees not the causes of things in the things themselves, but in God alone, to whom all things are possible, faith excells all other knowledge in as much as it sees and knows all things in their first Cause, God, and takes hold of them by the very root from whence they first spring, arguing from the Veracity of God, to the Truth of all his sayings, we know that God has spoken thus and thus, as *Joh.* 9. 29. we know the Doctrine is of God, *Joh.* 7. 17. and that no prophesie of the Scripture is of private Interpretation, 2 *Pet.* 1. 20, 21. under this conviction we cannot but yield the obedience of faith to every word of God: I do not deny but experience may and does give Believers some Evidence of the things themselves, but this belongs rather to their after Edification, then to the first act of Faith in their Conversion, by which they close in with Christ, upon the credit of a bare word of promise from him who cannot lie.

Object.

Object. Since theſe ſublime ſupernatural Miſteries of the Goſpel are ſo much above, and ſo ſeemingly contrary to humane Reaſon, how comes it to paſs that any man ſhould own them for Truths, and be brought under the power of them.

Anſw. 'Tis by a Divine Faith, I call it Divine becauſe 'tis the work of God that we believe his Teſtimony, *Joh.* 6. 29.

Queſt. Does not this Operation of God upon the Hearts of men in working faith in us, offer violence to mans Nature and force the Will to conſent to that which is above the Underſtanding: Or how can the efficacy of Gods Grace in determining Mans Will to ſuch a Spiritual Act of Faith in Chriſt Jeſus be conſiſtent with the liberty of the Will.

Anſw. Many intricate diſputes there are about this Point, managed by ſubtil heads, not without ſome ſhew and appearance of Reaſon, who to ſecure the liberty of Mans Will, have denied the efficacy of Gods Grace, placing the power of believing in man himſelf, to avoid the force that otherwiſe they think muſt be offered to his Will. But to clear the efficacy of Gods

Gods Grace from this imputation, I need say no more but this, *viz.*

That the Grace of God enters the Soul of man as a New Nature, and therefore cannot put any force upon him, Nature works kindly in all, by Inclination, not by Violence; as Nature is from Generation, so the new Nature is from Regeneration; one is the birth of the Flesh, the other of the Spirit; as we are born Men by our first birth, so we are born Christians by our second birth: Artificial Christians are all name, without any living Nature answerable to it, being not truly born of God and thereby made partakers of his Divine Nature.

The breathing in of this new Nature into the Soul of man by the Spirit of God, is that new Creation spoken of in the Gospel, 'tis the first Act of God in our Conversion, 'tis solely the Act of God, without any concurrence of ours, we have only a passive obediential power to receive the impression! 'Tis God that makes it, upon this supernatural Principle are grounded all after proceedings in bringing the Soul forward to an actual closure with Christ, all the natural powers and facul-

faculties of the Soul are gathered into this ſupernatural Principle, do act under it, are moved by it; and directed in all their free motions to a ſupernatural end, which they could not of themſelves tend unto; and let it not ſeem incredible to us that God ſhould do this, he can do no evil from the perfection of his Nature, and for the ſame reaſon all good muſt needs be in the power of his hand, the greateſt good that can be done to fallen Man, is thus to reſtore him. In this new Nature are wrapped up the ſeeds of all Grace, which by the efficacy of the Spirit, are drawn out into act, with the free conſent of Mans Will: Should God determine the Will of Man to a good act whilſt it is in a bad ſtate and under a corrupt nature, this would imply force and violence, but to lead out a man according to his new Nature, is not to put a force upon him. If Sin had that efficacy upon Man in his perfect ſtate, to encline his Will to Evil, why ſhould not Grace have the like efficacy upon Man fallen to encline his Will to good. Though an inclination to Evil in Man ſtanding was poſſible from the liberty of his Will in which he was created, yet ſuch an actual inclination was inconſiſtent with his perfect ſtate, and left ſuch an inherent crook-

crookedness in his perverted Nature that nothing but Grace can rectifie and make streight again. What is a principle of Grace, but liberty to Good restored to fallen man, from whence an actual inclination to choose what is good do's follow of course, when God calls and excites him thereunto, here is no force put upon mans Will, it acts freely in the choice of good, and it cannot be otherwise, since Grace enters as a new Nature, ingenerating a powerful Principle of Holiness in the Soul, that do's incline a man freely to comply which the efficacious grace of God exciting him to those acts of Holiness so agreeable to the Nature of the new Creature, as Sin reigns unto Death, so Grace will reign through Righteousness unto Eternal Life, *Rom.* 5. 21. Shall not he that raises the dead be able to quicken a dead Soul, but we are more sensible of that power that God puts forth upon the bodies of Men, then of that which he puts forth upon their Souls, *that you may know that the Son of man hath power to forgive sins, Take up thy bed and walk*, *Mat.* 9.6. This you all see, but the actings of my saving power upon the souls of men, that power that works within, (*Eph.* 3. 20.) you see not; let this that you see convince you

you of that which you ſee not, and never diſpute my power more to forgive ſin, I can heal the diſeaſes of the Soul as well as thoſe of the Body, the power that God has to forgive ſin is the great prerogative of God, belonging to the ſoveraignty of his grace. God walks inviſibly thorow the World, doing his mighty works of Grace, he touches ſome mens hearts, not others; he draws ſome and not others, by the ſweet yet irreſiſtable force of his Grace; we ſee nothing but man, mans Will, mans Choice, mans Act, and therefore conclude all is by mans own power, becauſe we ſee not the wheel within the wheel, the Spirit of God ſetting the whole ſoul in motion towards Chriſt: This *arcanum Jehovæ*, this ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, *Pſal.* 25. 14. The way of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men is diſcerned by few, 'tis a very hard matter to underſtand how God works in us to will and to do, becauſe we find it to be our own act to believe, repent and turn to God, we aſcribe all to our ſelves as if our own arm had ſaved us: The truth is, God in all the efficacious operations of his grace upon the hearts of men, loves to conceal himſelf, he will not be ſeen by others to do

do what he do's in and for his Saints, *no noiſe in the ſtreets, Matth.* 12. 19. *The kingdom of God comes not with obſervation, Luke* 17. 20, 21. All is done within ſecretly and ſilently, non are privy to this heart-work, but they that feel it, this is the hiding of his power from the obſervation of thoſe whom he never intends to work upon, and for the hardening of their hearts, that they may ſtill retain an opinion of their own ability to do that which they ſee others ſo freely and willingly addicting themſelves unto: Though this be a cauſe of ſtumbling to many, who boaſt of a ſuppoſed power and freedom of will to believe and repent when they pleaſe, yet ſuch in whoſe hearts God has wrought theſe mighty works of his grace, they ſee and feel the weight of his Arm revealed upon their ſouls, they know it is Gods doing, that a divine power has touched their hearts, and carried them out to all theſe acts of Faith that they put forth, they openly acknowledge this, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *Phil.* 4. 13. 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. *Gal.* 2. 20. *Not I but Chriſt.* When they feel themſelves moſt ſtrengthned by Chriſt, they are then moſt ſenſible of their own ſelf-inſufficiency and weakneſs, I can do all things through Chriſt, yet not ſufficient of

our

our ſelves to think a good thought; *when I am weak, then am I ſtrong*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. They would not ſay ſo, if they did not find a power more then humane exerting it ſelf within them, and ſtrengthning them with might in their inward man, I live, yet not I, but Chriſt lives in me, till we can thus diſtinguiſh between Nature and Grace, and ſee God influencing our Wills in all their free motions to that which is good, we ſhall vainly aſſume to our ſelves a power that never yet reduced it ſelf to the leaſt real act of Faith in any man whatever: 'tis eaſie talking of a power to believe, before we come to believe in good earneſt, then our ſtrength fails us if God do not ſupport us, and help our unbelief; *I believe, help my unbelief, q. d.* I can't hold it, my faith will fail, if God do not put his Everlaſting Arms underneath, if we conſider what difficulties, what ſtrong Objections unanſwerable by Reaſon, Faith Acts againſt in keeping up a lively hope of Pardon in the Conſcience of a convinced ſinner, we muſt needs ſay, 'tis the work of God that we believe; we may wonder at our ſelves as men, when we conſider what we believe as Chriſtians.

I have ſpoken all this to ſhew that God is the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, 'tis he only can open the heart, and diſpoſe it, to give Credit to the Word of his Grace.

Application.

By way of Diſcovery, *viz.*

How we may know when Faith comes by Hearing, even at the time of Hearing, and whether it be yet come into your hearts, by all you have heard hitherto.

Faith is a ſecret and a ſudden work, when it comes it gives ſome ſenſe of it ſelf to an obſerving Chriſtian, that quickly convinces us of a change in our ſelves, a heart truly turned to God, is not the ſame it was before, not in the ſame poſture, not in the ſame diſpoſition and frame, there is ſomething new appears in every new Creature, that do's not belong to the Old Man but riſes up in oppoſition to him: this newneſs do's not lye in ſome one corner of the heart, but every where, 'tis univerſal in every faculty; all things are become new, though the old leaven be not totally caſt out any where, but left

left as an occaſional provocation and challenge to the Grace of God to act in more oppoſition to thoſe motions of ſin, that put a force upon the New Creature, are directly contrary to the bent and genius of our renewed Nature; till Faith comes we are never ſenſible of any ſuch inward Conflicts between the fleſh and the Spirit; but then the fight begins, the good fight of Faith: 'Tis Faith ſtrikes the firſt ſtroke, makes the firſt aſſault upon our reigning ſin and corruptions, and will never ceaſe contending with them, till it has got a full Victory over them, and throughly mortified them.

But how ſhall we know in the very time of hearing, when Faith comes.

When the word Works effectually after hearing, it uſually gives ſome powerful touch upon the heart at the time of hearing; ſo 1 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. he ſpeaks there of the occaſional Converſion of an Unbeliever, who came into the Aſſembly, where there was Propheſying and Preaching, 'tis probable ſome ſuch are come in hither to day; Oh that God would meet with them, that they might be convinced and fall down upon their Faces,

worſhipping God, acknowledging that he is among us of a truth; ſo *Acts* 2. 37. their Hearts were prick'd, they cry out in the midſt of the Sermon, *Men and Brethren what ſhall we do?* We want ſuch publick Converſions, had we more of theſe New Births in our Congregations; we ſhould have more of theſe out-cries; which would be very awakening to us all, if God would honour his Ordinances with ſuch viſible ſigns of his preſence, as in the Primitive Times the Word was preached with that power, that it wrought a great conſternation and aſtoniſhment in the whole Aſſembly, there was a great impreſſion upon their minds, which had various effects; ſome blaſphemed, and ſome believed, but all were moved and ſtirred, ſtruck inwardly, though many ſaw not the hand that ſtruck them; 'tis otherwiſe now; hearers are more unconcern'd, in a more drowſie frame; we can hardly keep them waking all Sermon time; they ſay theſe were extraordinary caſes, not applicable to us now: I muſt tell you, Converſions wrought by ordinary means now, are extraordinary things, have extraordinary effects; the Light into which we are brought, is, and ought to be, as marvellous in our Eyes now, as 'twas in theirs

theirs heretofore; they who find nothing of this, neither in nor after Converſion, would do well to make a ſtricter inquiry into their ſtate; ſometimes we bring down Grace as low as we can for the ſake of weak ones, but we muſt not make nothing of it, to pleaſe ſome who would reſt in a ſilent eaſie Converſion, and think to go Heaven by the charitable Opinion others have of them; that ſo great a change as Converſion is, ſhould make ſo little appearance as it doe's in many pretending to it, is that we ſhould not eaſily digeſt, Let every one examine himſelf.

Should God come upon any of you with a through Conviction of Sin, and give you a real ſight of Chriſt as your only Saviour, you would not be able to contain your ſelves under this marvellous Light; 'twill be like Fire in your Bones, *Jer.* 20. 9. you'l immediately ſpring up as the Goaler did, *Acts* 16. 29. ἐισήδησε, he did not conſider which foot he ſhould put foremoſt, but leaped up on a ſuddain, broke out into a paſſionate inquiry after the way of Salvation.

Faith eſpecially at its firſt entrance, when it firſt comes into our Hearts, is al-

waies accompanied with a through Conviction of our loſt undone Eſtate: I don't ſpeak now of thoſe legal Convictions that in ſome may be preparatory to Converſion, but of that ſaving Evangelical Conviction that is of the Eſſence of ſaving Faith, alwayes accompanying it, it is the reaſon of Faiths earneſtneſs in its firſt actings upon Chriſt, *Maſter ſave us, we periſh.*

In the *Acts* we have ſeveral inſtances of Faith wrought in the time of hearing, *Acts* 10. 44. *While Peter yet ſpake, the Holy Ghoſt fell on all them which heard the word*: So *Acts* 14. 1. *Acts* 18. 8. *Acts* 28. 24. *Paul* perceived Faith in the Cripple by his attentive hearing, *Acts* 14. 9.

When Faith does not make this publick entrance into the Hearts of thoſe who hear the word; as it did in the Primitive times, in the view and face of the whole Congregation, and 'tis much to be lamented that it does not: I fear it portends more than I am willing to tell you; yet I hope Faith may and does come in a more ſilent manner into your Hearts at the time of hearing; this you may know by a ſudden aſtoniſhment, and trembling that ſezes upon the Soul, *Luke* 4. 33. *Acts* 13. 12. *Acts* 9. 6. When a diſcovery of the Evil of Sin, and of the Grace of Chriſt do meet toge-

together in one ſaving Conviction in the Conſcience of an awakened Sinner, we muſt needs be variouſly affected with horrour and hope; Grace clothes it ſelf with contrary paſſions at the ſame time, as it looks at Sin, and at Chriſt, loathing the one, and embracing the other; this may be perceived at the firſt opening of the Heart to believe the Goſpel, a preſent act of Faith is and will be the preſent ſenſe of the Soul in and about what it believes; there is no putting the word from us, when once we believe it in our Hearts: Men may talk of Goſpel-Truths under a formal profeſſion of Faith, and not be affected with them, but the Word works effectually in them that believe. Faith touches the Soul in the moſt ſenſible part of it, gathers up the Mind and Thoughts of a Man into a cloſe and ſerious debate with himſelf, about thoſe things which he believes in reference to himſelf; his Heart waxes hot within him; this is the Power and Dominion that Faith has over us, being the higheſt principle in Man; it overcomes all contradictions from the Fleſh, anſwers all Carnal Objections, throughly perſwades a Man, firmly eſtabliſhes the Heart in the belief of the preſent Truth, ſo that we become unmo-

vable from the hope of the Goſpel.

Theſe are the inward Commotions that Faith makes in the Soul at its firſt entrance, you cannot ſo ſlight the impreſſions of Faith, as not to be greatly concerned about them; 'tis not come to real believing till it comes to this; you are and muſt be ſerious in and about that which with your hearts you believe concerning your Eternal State.

Whether you now are, or ever have been in ſuch a frame, God and your own Conſciences know beſt; they are not trifles that you believe, but matters of that moment that you cannot but be concerned in them, and there is nothing required to fire your Hearts with a zealous ſolitude and thoughtfulneſs about them, but only your believing them; you can no more ſtep over ſuch an act of Faith, than you can ceaſe to think while you are actually thinking, or ceaſe to move while actually moving: An act of believing is the Soul in actual motion towards Chriſt, flying for refuge to the hope that is ſet before him. This is the way of the Spirit in working Faith at the time of hearing; and if you obſerve ſuch a one whoſe heart the

the Word has reached; he goes home muſing upon what he has heard: Suppoſe one ſtanding in the Spirit of *Iſaiah* at the Meeting-door, as you go forth crying out, *Who hath believed our report, to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed this day*; how experimentally would ſuch a one ſay, I have believed, to me hath the Arm of the Lord been revealed; follow him further into his Houſe, into his Chamber or Cloſet; behold he prayes, as the Word brings down the ſenſe of God into the Soul; ſo Prayer carries up the ſence of the Soul, concerning that word, *to God above*: Prayer, eſpecially juſt after Converſion, is but a Holy enlargement of the Heart about thoſe things that God firſt ſpeaks to us by his Word. *I will ſay 'tis my people, they ſhall ſay, the Lord is my God.*

In hearing expect no other reaſon for Faith, but the bare teſtimony of the Word of God, ſearch the Scriptures whether things are ſo or no, as Miniſters declare, if you find them ſo, charge them upon your Conſciences as moſt worthy of all acceptation and belief: Religion now a dayes is branched out into ſo many ſpeculations and ſubtle queſtions wrapped up

in ſuch terms of art, under ſuch nice diſtinctions, that the power and ſimplicity of the Goſpel is almoſt loſt, ordinary Profeſſors know not what to believe while the Pulpit gives ſuch an uncertain ſound.

There is not ſo much Rational Knowledge required to the obedience of Faith as ſome imagine, leave others to diſpute, to produce their Reaſons *pro* and *con*, do you quote Scripture and believe, begging of God to direct your faith into right apprehenſions of his revealed Will, hold faſt there and you are ſafe, the greateſt Scholars in the World muſt come down to the plain mans Faith, if ever they die in peace, in all Goſpel Truths, their conſonancy, not to our Reaſon, but to the Scriptures is to be regarded. Mans leaning rather to their own underſtanding of the thing, than to their faith in the Word, about that thing, hath led them into Error, into falſe notions of Divine Myſteries. I grant from your faith in one Truth you may fetch Reaſons for ſome other Truth depending upon it, theſe are Goſpel Reaſons not your own; we don't believe becauſe we know, but we know becauſe we believe; this is a new way of knowing things, which the world

world is not acquainted with, becauſe it cannot receive the ſpirit of Truth, the ſpirit of Truth is a ſpirit of Faith; hearing the Word is of ſingular uſe to Believers themſelves, 1 *Joh.* 5. 13. to confirm and ſtrengthen your Faith, that you may be built up further in it, furniſhed with further matter to act it upon.

Let none be diſcouraged though never ſo ignorant and unlearned, of a low, mean, capacity, yet come to hear with an expectation of Gods working faith in thee, faith will overcome all theſe difficulties, as weak and ſimple and ignorant as any may be ſuppoſed to be, yet be not diſcouraged, you may be made to believe more in one moment, than the greateſt Scholars in the World can attain to the knowledge of in many years ſtudy.

It is written in the prophets (Joh. 6. 45.) *and they ſhall be all taught of God, every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the father cometh unto me; Not that any man hath ſeen the Father.* 'Tis not what men you hear, what Miniſters you follow, till God the Father do's ſpeak powerfully to your hearts by the Miniſtry of man. It matters not who the man is, your faith conſiſts not in the Wiſdom of man

man, but in the power of God, when you have a proof of Christs speaking in any, 2 *Cor.* 13. 3. then hearken diligently, till you hear an inward Word from this invisible Teacher, you'l never come to Christ. If all the Ministers in the World should lay their heads together, they could never bring a sinner to Christ, till the Father speaks the word and draw him. We are but Ministers by whom you believe, as the Lord gives to every man; *So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase,* 1 Cor. 3. 5, 6, 7.

The sum of all is this, We are sent to Preach, that you may Hear; we carry the Letter of the Word to your Ears, the Spirit brings it home in the name of God to your Consciences, convincing you that it is his Word, under this Conviction you see the truth of the Word, in the veracity of God, this word of Truth and your Souls meeting so close, as they alwayes do in an act of Faith, sanctifies you; this sanctification lies in the ready assent of your understanding, and free consent of your Will, the one is founded in light, the other in love, so that when an enlightned Understanding receives the Truth in the love of the Truth, there is a firm

Principle

Principle of Holineſs fixed in that Soul, flowing from that Union to Chriſt that Faith gives us, this is the beginning and progreſs of that Faith, the end of which is the Salvation of your Souls.

The Second Point.

How we are Juſtified by Faith.

WE ought to be Doers of the Word and not Hearers only, to maintain good Works for neceſſary uſes, *Tit.* 3. 14. It behoveth us therefore to know what uſe we ſhould make of our works and doings in the great buſineſs of our Salvation, ſo as not to entrench upon the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, nor to degrade that from being our ſole and only juſtifying Righteouſneſs. Some men are as much miſtaken in grounding their ſalvation upon doing, as others are in grounding it upon bare hearing; and therefore theſe things muſt be warily ſpoken unto, and warily underſtood. When we urge the neceſſity of doing the Word of God, Carnal Reaſon lies at the catch, and is ready

ready to take every thing in a wrong ſenſe and meaning, and to bring down the Myſteries of the Goſpel to a low loyal vulgar Notion more ſuitable to humane Reaſon. There are two extreams that men are apt to run into; either they neglect good works, or elſe, they truſt in good works; either they do in a careleſs formal preſumptuous manner, pretend to caſt all upon Chriſt, without any ſerious inquiries after the Truth of Grace in themſelves, or ever proving it by its fruits; conceiving it altogether needleſs to be any way active in their own ſalvation. Secondly, If upon ſearch they find any actings of Grace in their Hearts, any fruits of Grace in their Lives, theſe are their own proper goods they think, Money found in their own Purſes; it matters not how they came by it, they have it, and they are reſolved to convert it to their own proper uſe, making it nothing leſs than a part of their Juſtifying Righteouſneſs.

Thoſe of this way, with whom I have now to do, do ſtate the matter thus.

They ſay, that Chriſt is the meritorious cauſe of our Juſtification, having by his Death ſatisfied the Law, and diſcharged us from the Curſe of it; and ſo far we agree with them.

They

They ſay further, That Chriſt to compleat our Juſtification, hath alſo purchaſed for us ſtrength and ability to perform the condition of the new Covenant (this we aſſent to) the performance of which according to them, is to be taken in as a part of our Juſtifying Righteouſneſs, and this we deny.

We ſay the performance of what is required in the New Covenant, is a good Juſtification of the Cauſe, whether it be of Faith or of Good Works, or of any particular thing or action, the ſincerity and truth of which may be in queſtion. But we deny that it adds any thing to the Juſtification of the perſon, and therefore they ſpeak not *ad idem*, to the ſame thing, when they deny Chriſts imputed Righteouſneſs to be the ſole Righteouſneſs that juſtifies the Perſon, becauſe there is another Righteouſneſs required, upon another account to juſtifie or clear up the ſincerity of our Faith and Holineſs; I ſay to clear up this to our ſelves and other men, which we deny not. For we do not admit any Faith to be a juſtifying Faith, but upon good evidence of the Truth of it, neither do we admit any works

works to be good works but upon full proof of the goodness of them.

The Sum of all is this; we say, Faith and obedience once proved to be true and genuine, are good evidences of our interest in Christ, whose imputed Righteousness is the sole and only Righteousness by which our Persons are universally justified from all charges and blame whatsoever in the sight of God, and to say otherwise is in effect to say that Christ died to justifie us, that we might be justified without him; or at least not only and solely by him; which is highly derogatory to the death of Christ, neither will their owning Christ to be the meritorious cause of our Justification salve the matter while they do in any sense require another Righteousness distinct from that of Christs, for the justification of our Persons in the sight of God.

And having given you this brief account of the matter in difference, I shall now proceed.

The Point in General which I am to speak to is this. That though good works are highly necessary in a justified person, yet

yet they not required in any way of cauſality to the Juſtification of the Perſon. Or thus, no part of our inherent Righteouſneſs can be any part of our juſtifying Righteouſneſs.

This I might prove to you many ways.

Firſt, From the ſubject of Juſtification, an ungodly Perſon; a believing Sinner flying in the ſenſe of Sin unto Jeſus Chriſt for Life and Pardon. Sin is that from which we are Juſtified, the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt is that for which or by which we are Juſtified, *Act.* 13. 39.

Secondly, Becauſe there muſt be a change of ſtate in Juſtification, and by Juſtification, before we can derive any ſaving Grace from Chriſt to enable us to the leaſt good work. I might alſo

Thirdly, Argue from the weakneſs and imperfection of all Inherent Holineſs which is not able to juſtifie it ſelf, much leſs the Perſon.

And many Arguments may be brought; but my deſign is to contract this general to a particular point, concerning the

credere,

credere, or the act of believing; and I ſhall ſhew that that part of our inherent Righteouſneſs that flows from our doing the Word of God, that is, the Work of Faith as done by us in an act of believing, is no part of our juſtifying Righteouſneſs. This is that which ſeems to have the faireſt claim to, and intereſt in, our Juſtification; and if this be diſproved, the Argument will hold a *fortiori* againſt all the inferiour branches of our inherent Righteouſneſs; they muſt be forced to quit their claim alſo.

That which ſeems to intitle Faith to ſuch an Intereſt in our Juſtification as is pleaded for by ſome, is the phraſe and manner of expreſſion which the Scripture uſes in ſpeaking of Faith, telling us that Faith is imputed to us for Righteouſneſs, that we are juſtified by Faith; that he that believes ſhall be ſaved, and the like.

The queſtion is, in what ſenſe theſe Scriptures are to be underſtood; whither we are to take up our ſtanding partly in the act of Faith, and partly in the object of Faith, making up a Righteouſneſs, partly from our ſelves, and partly from Chriſt, or whether we are by Faith to

to go out of our ſelves unto Chriſt for our whole, ſole and only juſtifying Righteouſneſs; and this is that which I affirm, and ſhall endeavour to make good, and ſhew you that the Scriptures alledged do not aſcribe our Juſtification to the Act, but wholly to the Object of Faith; not to our believing, but to Chriſt believed on, which I prove thus:

Firſt, From thoſe Expreſſions of Scripture peculiar to Holy Writ, by which the Holy Ghoſt doth of ſet purpoſe limit Faith to its Object, *John* 6. 47. *Rom.* 9. 33. *Epheſ.* 1. 13. πιστεύειν εἰς, ἐπί, ἐν, to believe in, into, or upon Chriſt, which plainly points out this, that Faith is alwayes to be taken in relation to its Object; that by Faith is meant Chriſt apprehended by Faith. Life is promiſed, not ſimply to believing, but to believing in; in whom? in Chriſt, or nothing. Faith is a relative term (as to its whole ſenſe and ſignification) to the Object Chriſt. It muſt be Faith in Chriſt, or Faith in nothing. Believing is a Scripture Phraſe, ſetting forth our leaning upon Chriſt. Faith, as our Act adds nothing to Chriſt, doth not make his Death ſatisfactory; it was ſo in its ſelf before, though by an applicatory

act of Faith it is made ſo to us; that is, we do reap the benefits of his Death and ſatisfaction; we are not united to Faith, but by Faith we are united to Chriſt. Faith is the *Medium uniens*; we do not truſt in our Faith, but by Faith we truſt in Chriſt; all that Faith ſignifies is in relation to Chriſt; all that it doth, is in the Name of Chriſt; without Chriſt it ſignifies nothing, it doth nothing, it is nothing. When we are ſaid to be juſtified by the Faith of Chriſt, or juſtified by Faith in Chriſt, *Gal* 2.16. pray muſt the meaning be, that we are juſtified by Faith, and Chriſt, as ſome would have it, giving the priority to Faith, and making Chriſt but a remote cauſe of our Juſtification, and our inherent Righteouſneſs to be the next and immediate cauſe? Were Men more willing to exalt Chriſt, and debaſe themſelves, this would be *Engliſh* plain enough: Faith in Chriſt would then ſignifie but one Righteouſneſs; it would not be Faith and Chriſt. Let Men have a care how they ſpeak unadviſedly of Chriſt to the leſſening and diminution of his Honour: God hath ſaid he is our Righteouſneſs without any Limitation, without any reſtriction: Now for Men to ſay, ay but not all our Righteouſneſs, not our only Righteouſneſs

teouſneſs; I ſay, 'tis a bold word thus to diſtinguiſh whatever remote inferences they may gather out of Scripture to juſtifie their meaning; yet ſince God hath not thought fit to drop any ſuch diminutive expreſſion of Chriſt in Scripture, I ſay it is a bold word for Men to ſpeak. You may ſee how ſeverely ſpeaking againſt God was puniſhed, *Numb.* 21. 5, 6. And God complains of it, *Ezek.* 35. 13. *With your mouths ye have boaſted againſt me, and have multiplyed your words againſt me: I have heard them.* We may ſafely deny any thing of God that implies weakneſs or imperfection; but to deny that of Chriſt which tends to the Exaltation of his Name and riches of his Grace; let Men diſtinguiſh how they will, it is dangerous meddling here: This is a tender point; that is the firſt.

Secondly, If the bare act of Faith without any relation to the object, juſtifies; then any act of Divine Faith will juſtifie us as well as Faith in Chriſt; for the Act is ſpecified by the Object: Take away the Object, and all Acts of Faith are alike, equally inſignificant. But I proceed.

Thirdly, To the third Argument that shall be drawn from the Nature of Faith, which consists in receiving. As it is the Act of a Believer, it implies doing; but properly as an Act of believing; it consists in receiving, and that with an empty hand: Now the question is whether by this receiving Act of Faith there do redound to us a Righteousness of our own, distinct from that which we receive from Christ? I say no: We are not justified by a Righteousness that we do, but by a Righteousness that we receive: Now the bare Act of receiving in a common Natural way, is not counted morally meritorious: A Beggars receiving an Alms, argues no merit in the Receiver, but meer Grace in the Donor. We count that he who only receives a benefit, he doth nothing for it, it comes freely: Indeed he doth something naturally in receiving, but nothing morally by way of merit for the thing received. Thus it is among Men, and so we understand it, in all such actings of ours; but when we come to deal with God, how do our proud hearts put a value upon them; then we put a value upon every thing, upon our coming, upon our adhering, upon our relying, upon our asking, upon our receiving; We grow

grow proud of thoſe very Acts of Grace by which we do expreſs our Poverty and Beggary, our abſolute Dependance upon another; as if Chriſt was beholden to us for our accepting of him: So naturally prone are we to reſt upon any thing that looks like our own doing.

Brethren! There are two things to be conſidered in Faith.

(1.) The Motion of the Soul in receiving, which is an Act naturally neceſſary to all manner of receiving; it is as reaching forth, and opening the hand.

(2.) You may conſider the paſſive reception it ſelf, wherein the Nature of Faith doth chiefly conſiſt, in admitting, applying, and owning the Gift.

Though the word Believing doth Grammatically imply an Action, yet really and phyſically we are paſſive in believing: For theſe Reaſons.

Firſt, The firſt Reaſon is this; They who make our Act of believing a part of our Juſtifying Righteouſneſs, do manifeſtly make Faith to contradict it ſelf

in and by its own Act: If by an Act of believing we go out of our selves to Christ for all: I do not see how by the same Act we can possibly settle upon any thing in our selves that is not Christ: If by being justified by faith they understand the Object of faith, then we agree with them; then faith and Christ is all one: By faith we mean Christ applyed, and nothing but Christ. But if they understand the bare Act of believing in distinction from Christ the Object; therein we differ from them. And they must so understand it who make our Act of believing a part of our justifying Righteousness distinct from Christs Righteousness; and therein I say, they make faith to contradict it self in and by its own Act: I do not know whether I am understood; I think I understand my self in what I have said: Take it thus, Pray consider what is the sense of a believing Soul under a present Act of faith in Christ? I appeal to you all, I desire you would all be Judges in this matter who have ever been serious, and in good earnest, dealing with God by an act of faith for Salvation. You believe in Christ, what is the *English* of that? What do you mean by it? Is not this your sense; you desire to cast your self wholly upon Christ,

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to be found in Chriſt not having on your own Righteouſneſs; to be built upon that Foundation, to lay hold on Eternal Life in Chriſt; to go out of your ſelves unto Chriſt for Righteouſneſs and Life; to ſeek that in another which you have not in your ſelves; to count all things but loſs and dung that you may win Chriſt; don't you mean this? Pray what an abſurdity then is it, what a groſs contradiction to ſay I am juſtified by ſomething in my ſelf, by virtue of that very act of faith, by which I do purpoſely go out of my ſelf to Chriſt for all. If this be Reaſon and Senſe, I have quite loſt the uſe of both, and will never pretend to underſtand any thing. But how do ſome Men fight with their own ſhadows and loſe themſelves in their own expreſſions. They cannot ſpeak of Chriſt, and of the way and manner of applying Chriſt, but preſently they muſt be Co-workers with Chriſt in their Juſtification.

Brethren! We muſt not be perſwaded out of our Chriſtian Names, nay out of Chriſtianity it ſelf by thoſe who would impoſe their own notions upon us, and indeed preach another Goſpel; let them read on and tremble. But I will ſay this,

that if *Paul* were alive, and ſhould hear any man upon Earth, or Angel from Heaven compound Faith and Works, Works and Chriſt in the matter of our Juſtification, I doubt not but he would curſe them in the name of the Lord. Certainly we are not to be Mealy-mouthed, and ſilently ſuffer the grand principles of the Goſpel to be decryed, as if we doubted whether they were true or no. Theſe are the Pillars of the Houſe, all fall with them, if they be taken away. Theſe are the Ancient Land marks and bounds of our Religion; they muſt not be removed, for if you ſuffer that, you will quickly have a dead Child in the room of the living. New Notions, though not contrary to any received foundation, ſhould be warily uttered; but ſuppoſing there is the leaſt diſcrepancy or oppoſition, it is our duty and wiſdom to be ſilent, and not break the eye of the Needle, by forcing our Camel through. New Notions muſt yield rather to antient received Truths, they muſt be governed and overruled by them. It is dangerous to force plain Scripture, and plain principles to make good our own private interpretations.

2. Our act of believing is no part of our

our juſtifying Righteouſneſs, becauſe juſtification is an act of God; not properly ſubſequent to our Faith, but ſimultaneous with it. They are concomitants, ſo cloſe, ſo inſtantaneous, that we cannot ſay which is firſt, or laſt in time; we cannot ſay the one takes its riſe from the other. I explain my ſelf thus; it is one thing for the Scripture to ſpeak Doctrinally of Faith, another thing to ſpeak of a Believer under the actual exerciſe of Faith. When the Scripture ſpeaks of the Doctrine of Faith in the Abſtract, it tells us the conſequents of it, that according to Gods order and appointment, Faith is requiſite unto Juſtification, and ſo Faith is antecedent to Juſtification, and Juſtification is ſpoken of as a thing to come, upon our believing. The Doctrine of Faith ſhews what ſhall be to all who obtain it; the actual exerciſe of Faith ſhews, what is to them who have it, and do believe it. It is not only he that believes ſhall be ſaved and juſtified, but is juſtified. It is true, who ever believes ſhall be ſaved; the juſt ſhall live by faith, this is Doctrinally true. But he that believes hath everlaſting Life, *John* 3. 39. is juſtified; this is experimentally true. God, if you rightly conſider the point, doth juſtifie us, by working Faith

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in us. It is his way of Juſtifying; it is the way God hath choſen to communicate the Righteouſneſs of God, which is a ſtupendious Myſtery, and cannot be otherwiſe applied to the ſoul. He doth not juſtifie us becauſe of any antecedent act of Faith we have lying by us, and which we could now produce as a price (as it were) and Meritorious Means of our Juſtification. God juſtifies us by working Faith in us; God being willing in ſo great an act of Grace, to ſpeak to our Underſtandings and Knowledge, he hath appointed Faith as a fit means by which the ſoul not only doth the thing, but alſo lets in a ſenſe of what is done upon the ſoul; and therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *it is of faith that it might be of grace*: God will be underſtood in all the acts of his Grace towards us. Now that there might be in us a ſenſe of reception of ſo great a benefit, God reſolves to put it into the hand of Faith, which hath a natural ſutableneſs in it, and fitneſs to receive what free Grace tenders to it; and ſo it doth when it is in any ſtrength. Chriſt and our Souls would never meet were it not for Faith. There is no letting down any thing ſpiritual and ſupernatural into the ſoul, but by Faith; Faith is our *modus habendi*, it is the *way*, the

the *means* by which we come to have God and Chriſt, and an Intereſt in the things of Heaven. We have what we have from Chriſt by *Faith*, and we hold it by *Faith*. *Faith* and Repentance as acted by us, and reflected upon, are very good Evidences of our Juſtifications, for it is in that reflection only that they do give evidence of themſelves, and of any thing produced from them. Therefore, I ſay, as they are reflected upon they have retroſpection to our Juſtification, of which they are very good and evident proofs; but they have no antecedent cauſality to produce the thing ſignified, becauſe they ſignifie it, as a thing already done, paſt and perfect.

3. And laſtly, Juſtification is frequently ſet down in Scripture without any relation to theſe acts of Grace in us, to ſhew that it wholly flowes from Chriſt; and that by our believing we add nothing to our Juſtifying Righteouſneſs, but do only apply it, as wholly derived from Chriſt alone, 1 *Joh.* 5. 12. *He that hath the Son, hath life*; they that are in Chriſt there is no Condemnation to them, *Rom.* 8. 1. Now becauſe we cannot admit ſinners to be in Chriſt but by faith, therefore what flows from Chriſt, is attributed unto

to faith; which is, I ſay, our *modus habendi*, but ſtill the real cauſe of our Juſtification, that which makes us juſt in the ſight of God, is our being in Chriſt, and our having the Son. There is no mention made of having any thing elſe; but faith is our *modus habendi*; we cannot have the Son but by faith, nor be in Chriſt but by Believing. Therefore God ſpeaks, to our Underſtanding, and hath attributed that to the act of faith, which is only derivable from the Object.

I ſhall now ſhew you the weakneſs of thoſe grounds and reaſons they go upon, who differ from us in this point.

1. They ſpeak much of a Charge of Infidelity, Impenitency and Unholineſs to be drawn up againſt us at the laſt day, and therefore it concerns us to muſter up all our good works, all our acts of Grace, and every part of our inherent Righteouſneſs, that we may be in a readineſs to anſwer to this Charge and clear our ſelves.

A ſpecious Argument! enough to amuſe the World, and fright men back into the Popiſh Doctrine of Juſtification by Works.

Brethren!

Brethren! I do not deny that unbelieving, impenitent and ungodly Perſons ſhall be charged with infidelity, impenitency and ungodlineſs, and be condemned; but to talk of a charge of Infidelity againſt a Believer at the laſt day, I ſay, it is a groundleſs, unſcriptural Notion. I do not deny that the faith of the Saints that draws them to Chriſt, and its efficacy afterwards in all its fruits, will be taken notice of by Chriſt, when they are admitted into the Kingdom, *Mat.* 25.34. *Come ye bleſſed*; and when that bleſſedneſs is fixed, Chriſt doth not put them upon the proof of their faith, but helps them himſelf to underſtand the former actings of their faith and love to God, which they were ignorant of before. *When ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirſty and gave thee drink?* &c. *In as much as ye have done it to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye have done it to me.* I ſee more Grace in you ſaith Chriſt, than ever you ſaw in your ſelves, ſo and ſo appearing in your lives; *Come ye bleſſed.*

Brethren, Good Works are good Evidences to us, to make out the Truth of Grace in us; but the All-knowing God needs no ſuch Evidences for his Information

tion; he knows what is in man, and needs not that any ſhould tell him. He ſearches the Heart. Though we ſee Grace only in the Fruit, yet God ſees it in the Root and Principle. Beſides, I conceive, the laſt Judgment is not to prove who is, and who is not in a ſtate of Grace; but rather to pronounce the Sentence according to the ſtate that every one ſhall appear in at the Reſurrection. There will be no doubting of any mans ſtate at the Reſurrection; the method and manner of the Reſurrection will decide it. Chriſt himſelf will ſeparate the Sheep from the Goats; and he will do this before the Judgement, *Mat.* 25. 32, 33. You ſhall know a Believer then by his Station at the right hand of Chriſt; by his Company among the Sheep. The Angels are ſent forth, *Mat.* 24. 31. to gather up the Elect from the four Winds, from the one end of Heaven to the other. They will ranſack every corner of the World to find out every Saint; not only the Ninety and Nine, but the whole Hundred ſhall be preſented to God; not one miſſing, we ſhall all ſtand together. Now after they are thus ranked by Chriſt, and the Angels have declared them to be Sheep, to be true Believers, muſt they come under a Charge

charge of infidelity? Who muſt draw up this charge, and manage this falſe Indictment? Either God, or good Angels, or Conſcience, or the Devil. God he hath juſtified them here, ſealed them by the Spirit of Adoption to the day of Redemption, and he will never reverſe his judgment.

The judgment of God at the laſt day will be purſuant to the judgment already paſt by his Word and Spirit in the Hearts and Conſciences of Believers here. Good Angels are imployed to gather up the Elect, and conſequently they have a true diſcerning who they are. Our Conſciences are ſprinkled with the Blood of Jeſus, and have an anſwer in readineſs, by the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead. And the Devil will have ſomething elſe to do in that day, when he ſtands at the head of the wicked to receive his ſentence with them, the time of his torment being then come. Though he be now the accuſer of the brethren day and night before God, he muſt then Eternally be caſt down. True, he is now our accuſer, and we muſt labour to overcome him by the Blood of the Lamb, as *Rev.* 12. 10, 11. that is, by Arguments drawn from

from the Blood of Jesus; yet I say fear him not after death. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death, saith the Apostle; and must we have an after rancounter with the Devil? Must we be set upon a fresh by him? No, no, after death he hath done with you for ever; he will not dare to look you in the face at the last day: He draw up a charge against you? You shall accuse, judge and condemn him, and all the Devils in Hell, *1 Cor. 6. 3.* Never fear, you that dye in the Lord, shall rise up under those denyable evidences of a state of Grace, that neither the Devils nor wicked Men shall dare to gain-say. What, must poor Christians who have lived under doubts, fears, under buffetings and temptations, under accusations and challenges from the Devil and their own Consciences, must they rise so? Is this to be raised in power, with our Spirits made perfect? Surely *Paul* was out in his triumph, *Rom. 8. 33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect?* Do you make good your Title to Christ now, and never fear any charges afterwards at that day; it will be a joyful day to Believers. *Look up*, saith Christ, *lift up your heads for your Redemption draweth nigh, Luke 21. 28.*

And

And therefore comfort one another; your Witneſs is in Heaven, and your Record is on high, as *Job* ſpeaks, God, Chriſt, Angels, Conſcience, will all be on your ſide.

Aye, but if this feigned proceſs be not obſerved, ſome mens notions will fall to the ground. Aye, and let them fall; no matter how ſoon; for they are not grounded upon the Word of God that endureth for ever. Brethren, we muſt not draw Schemes and Models from our own Brain, and when we have done, impoſe them upon God, and make his proceedings in every particular exactly to ſuit the methods of Humane Judicatures: The natural notion of theſe things is ſo ſtrong in ſome mens heads, that it doth carry them out beyond the line of the Goſpel. Good works certainly do beſt, furtheſt off from the judgment ſeat of God. They are good and comfortable evidences here, but they will make but a ſorry Righteouſneſs there for us to plead. Though God may and will take notice of all the fruits of his Grace appearing in our words or works, when he paſſeth the ſolemn declaratory Sentence at the laſt day, which is but a fuller ma-

niſeſtation of our juſtification. God will perſonally and publickly own that which he hath ſecretly in our Conſciences, done by his Word and Spirit in us. God doth now act mediately by his word, then he will act immediately by himſelf; we ſhall hear the ſentence of our Juſtification from his own mouth, which now we hear only from the mouths of his Miniſters that ſpeak to us in his name.

Secondly, The ſecond ground they go upon is this, they ſay, that it is a conditional ſervice impoſed upon us by God in the new Covenant; and therefore the performance of it muſt needs be part of our Juſtifying Righteouſneſs; which is very ſpecious, and very ſuitable to Humane Reaſon, as moſt things are that contradict the Myſteries of the Goſpel, but it is of like ſound and ſignificancy with the other.

Alas! At how little a hole will ſelf-Righteouſneſs creep in? How apt are we in the pride of our hearts to diſtinguiſh our ſelf-Righteouſneſs into our Juſtification, that we may have ſomewhat whereof to glory. To prevent miſtakes I will premiſe one thing; that is this, I do not

deny, but that to believe in God, in Christ, is an eminent piece of service, a great act of Divine Worship, the greatest act of Worship we can perform to God on this side Heaven. But I deny that it is a service done in order to the procuring or purchasing those benefits which we receive from Christ as his free gift. Faith receives what Christ hath already procured. Faith doth not come to Christ, to desire him to dye for us; but having dyed for us, it comes for the fruit of his death: It comes on no other Errand but to receive what is already prepared. Faith hath no causality or efficiency at all in contriving, compassing, constituting the great act of Grace, wherein the pardon of our sin and our justification is held forth unto us. Our Faith did not move God to promise pardon, but finding all this Grace in Jesus, Faith applyes it, lays hold on it, and God gives us leave, nay commands us to do this. So that Faith is a service we owe to God by way of duty in complyance with his free Grace towards us, but it is not a service done by us in way of procuring that which is freely given. No, no, we owe that to Christ and not to Faith. Brethren! In common acceptation, when we say come to me,

and I will do this and that for you; pray who is the doer, he that comes to have the thing done, or he that doth it. Certainly if coming be a ſervice in this caſe, it is a ſervice done to a Mans ſelf, and can never be urged as a ſervice done to God.

But they further ſay, that this is a conditional ſervice: Why? Becauſe God hath commanded us to believe that we may be juſtified. Commanded us to believe and pray, what is that? I told you before the meaning of an act of Faith, even to renounce our own Righteouſneſs, to come in our nakedneſs and poverty to Chriſt, without Money or without Moneys worth, that we may be enriched by him in all things. Is not this the old, honeſt, plain down-right notion of believing? And is this the Conditional ſervice required? Why don't you do it then? Who is againſt it? Only let them attend to the ſenſe of Faith, and not be carried away with the meer word and talk of Faith, as their own act, never regarding the inward ſenſe and ſignification of the thing it ſelf. Hath God required us to believe in Jeſus; let us know what that means and do it; no body

body is againſt it. If that be the Conditional ſervice, let them lye low before God, and ſeem more vile in their own eyes, and caſt themſelves upon Chriſt for all. Let them learn to come without Money. This is the proper Obedience of Faith; that Obedience which the Doctrine of the Goſpel doth require; and ſince you will call this a condition, I ſay, why don't you perform it? Is this the performance of ſuch a condition of believing, according to the ſenſe and meaning of believing, to tell the World that Chriſt is not our only Juſtifying Righteouſneſs, that we muſt ſeek for ſomething in our ſelves to joyn with him, if ever we will be ſaved? Is this the condition? Doth God mean this, when he bids me believe in Jeſus? Sirs! Let us not read our Bibles backwards; wreſting Scripture to our own deſtruction: It is ſtrange to me, that Faith which is all along in Scripture oppoſed to Works in our Juſtification, and is appointed by God to ſhut all good works out of Juſtification, ſhould be thus made an inlet to bring all good works into Juſtification. Oh! That we were more under the powerful actings of true Juſtifying Faith, it would then open it ſelf more fully to us, and ſhew us its

meaning. I wiſh we could a little better underſtand the actings of our *Faith*, underſtand the reaſon, the ſenſe of it, the importance, the intent of an act of *Faith*, what a thing *Faith* is.

Thirdly, They ſuppoſe a double Juſtification, and a double Juſtifying Righteouſneſs; the firſt to juſtifie us from the accuſations of the Law, the other to juſtifie the ſincerity of our *Faith* and Holineſs; and here comes in all our inherent Righteouſneſs. This is ſpecious too: But I would not have men coyn new heads of Divinity to make good their own notions. We know but of one Juſtification, I ſay, the ſecond Juſtification, which they talk of, it is implyed in the firſt; aud therefore needleſs and unſcriptural: For ſince the Revelation of the Goſpel, infidelity and unbelief is a ſin againſt the Moral Law; and Faith in Chriſt is injoyned as a duty by the Moral Law; by which we take God to be our God, and conſequently do bind our ſelves over to believe whatſoever he had, or hereafter ſhould reveal to be his Will. This we are bound to by the Moral Law; therefore if we are (as they themſelves affirm) freed by Juſtification from the Law

of

of Works upon the condition of Faith, then we are on our firſt Juſtification abſolutely freed from infidelity, and our Faith is ſufficiently approved to be true, and what then need a ſecond Juſtification, unleſs we will ſuppoſe an error in the firſt Judgment; which is impious to ſuppoſe; as if God ſhould acquit us from the accuſation of the Law of Works upon the condition of Faith; which upon after examination, Chriſt diſcovers to be falſe and unſound. So that theſe things do not hang together.

Fourthly, They ſay that Faith and Holineſs are conditions and evidences of our title to Chriſt, and all that comes by him; and therefore part of our Juſtifying Righteouſneſs.

It is hard to underſtand the ſtrength of ſome mens reaſoning; but grant all this, it amounts to no more but Chriſt, and a title to Chriſt, ſo far we are agreed, for we deſire no more. But how they will make Faith which is our title to Chriſt, and unto which Chriſt and all his benefits are by the Goſpel granted, promiſed and made over; how they will make this title never ſo well evidenced,

to be part of our Justifying Righteousness, I see not : A title adds nothing to the inheritance, makes it neither more nor less, but conveys it down to us, according to the intrinsick value of the thing, be it more or less. A title to Land is no part of the Land ; only we are invested in it as it is, by vertue of our title. Now therefore if the Righteousness of Christ be not of it self sufficient to justifie us, I see not how a good title mends the matter ; for if the Estate be never so great, and we have no good title to it, it is worth nothing to us ; and if our title be never so good, we can have no more then is, and belongs to the title. So that after all this stir about conditions and evidences of our title to Christ, the result of all is this, we have a title, a good title, are under all the conditions and evidences of a good title ; but to what ? To an Inheritance that is not sufficient to maintain us, to a Righteousness that is not sufficient of it self alone to justifie us ; and where are we now with our conditions and evidences of our title ? For ever destitute of a compleat Justifying Righteousness. Is this to Preach Christ ? To Preach the glad Tidings of the Gospel ?. Is this the way to quiet and

settle

ſettle the Conſciences of poor diſtreſſed ſinners? ſurely no.

Fifthly, They urge the literal ſenſe of ſome few Scriptures that ſeem to ſpeak for them; eſpecially two; and I do not know of more in the whole Bible, as to the literal ſignification; if there were we ſhould hear enough of it. I know they quote many others, which add no weight at all to the Argument they would ground upon them, Therefore I ſhall not ſpeak to them. Thoſe two are *Mat.* 12.37. *By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned*; and that in *James*, where it is ſaid, *Abraham was juſtified by works*, *Jam.* 2. 23.

For that in *Matthew*, *Calvin* charges the Papiſts with very great weakneſs in offering to draw an Argument from that Text for Juſtification by Works. *Maldonate* a Learned Jeſuite on the other hand is very angry with *Calvin* for ſuppoſing any of the *Roman* Church to be ſo weak and injudicious, as to argue ſo from that Scripture; for, ſaith he, we very well underſtand that this Text doth not ſpeak *De juſtificatione, qua juſti efficimur, ſed de judicis ſententia, qua, ſumpto ex verbis*

verbis nostris argumento, justi declaramur. So saith the Jesuite; we know this Text doth not speak of that which is the cause of our Justification, of the thing for which, and by virtue of which we become just and righteous, only here is the appearance of our Righteousnes by our words, and we are declared to be Righteous. So that this doth not touch this cause of Justification; and yet this is the main Text brought for it, the main proof repeated again and again, to prove inherent righteousnes to have an influence into our Justification. I say let them take the answer from the Papists or Protestants, which they please, they are both against them in this thing.

As for the other Scripture, They will take it in no other sense but what implyes a contradiction to all other Texts of Scripture in the case. The whole current of Scripture is against Works in Justification, and leads us to a fair construction of that in *James*, that it is to be understood of a justification before men, and not of a justification before God. Protestant Writers have sufficiently cleared up this, to the Conviction of all but such who are resolved not to be Convinced. Certainly they should have a care how they abound too much in their own

own ſenſe. The Learned Lord *Bacon* ſaith, *that a little Philoſophy makes men Atheiſts, but a great deal will convince them of a Deity.* Some mens Logick and School Learning overthrows Reaſon, which duely improved and well managed, would teach them to argue otherwiſe: Certainly in our reaſoning about Divine things we ſhould be careful not to abound too much in our own ſenſe. It is better for us to leave the Myſtery of the Goſpel in its Myſtery where we found it, than to ſeek to draw it out, and ſo to explain it, as to force it into the mould of Humane Reaſon, ſhaping it on every ſide to an exact conformity to the thoughts and conceptions of our weak imperfect Underſtanding; I ſay, no Goſpel Truth will bear this. After all our Faith and Knowledge and Experience, we know but in part, and there is at the end of every Goſpel Truth, a Myſtery; ſomething that is paſſing our Underſtanding, that calls for ſilence, for an holy Admiration, for an humble ſubmiſſion in Faith to the Will of God. Therefore I would not have men ſpeak as if they knew all, and draw particular Schemes, and it muſt be ſo, and no otherwiſe; and thus and thus you muſt

proceed

proceed in this and that way and form, therefore things muſt be ſo ſtated.

I have done with the Argumentative part. I will now ſpeak a word or two in a looſer way of Diſcourſe.

I ſay then thus, he may be a true Believer who doth not take his faith for any part of his Juſtifying Righteouſneſs; I ſuppoſe that will be granted: But he cannot be a true Believer who takes not Chriſt for his Juſtifying Righteouſneſs. I do not ſay now for his only Juſtifying Righteouſneſs, becauſe I would ſpeak in the ſenſe of thoſe I oppoſe. I ſay, they cannot be Believers who do not look upon Chriſt as their Juſtifying Righteouſneſs; but they may be true Believers who do not look upon faith as a part of their Juſtifying Righteouſneſs. For the firſt, ſuppoſe it an Error, it is only about the act in our apprehenſion which doth not alter the nature of the thing at all. The ſecond is an Error in the act, which quite deſtroys the very nature of faith. Therefore the ſafer way is rather to preſs perſons to believe, to ſee they have faith indeed and in Truth, than urge them to ſuch an unſcriptural conſtruction of their faith, putting

putting ſuch a title of Honor upon it to the reproach of Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs. They honour faith ſufficiently who only prefer Chriſt before it. No doubt God will give faith its due praiſe and place at the laſt day; our not knowing or not underſtanding the reach and truth of our faith in all circumſtances of it, will be no prejudice to faith at the laſt day. I heartily wiſh, we were more in the Exerciſe of Faith than in Controverſies about it; more in the Practiſe of Good Works than in Diſpute about them; we ſhould then ſooner underſtand both the one and the other. Sirs! the myſterious, ſublime Doctrine of Juſtification was revealed for our comfort, and propoſed to our faith to be believed; not to our reaſon to argue upon in a *Quodlibetical* manner and to toſs to and fro for Argument ſake. What if we know no more of Juſtification then is abſolutely neceſſary for our Juſtification? This is the caſe of many plain, ſincere hearted Chriſtians; and if it were ſo with us all, we may have fewer Notions in our Heads, but poſſibly more Grace in our Hearts. The Lord grant, that we may know the Doctrine of Juſtification ſo as they know it who are ſaved by Chriſt. But *ſurgunt indocti & rapiunt Cœlum,*

Cœlum, & nos cum doctrinis nostris sine corde, volutamur in carne & in sanguine. The Learned they dispute and wrangle themselves into Hell; the unlearned they believe, practice and gain Heaven, taking up the truth in simplicity according to the general scope of the Gospel, as it is held forth to the meanest Capacity. Brethren! what *Paul* said to the Jaylor, *Acts* 16. 31. that I say to you all, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou and thy house shall be saved.* Don't you go home now, and tell your Families that they must not understand this Text so as to look upon Christ as their only justifying righteousness, but look out for something in themselves if ever they be saved. No, pray speak Scripture Language, expound Scripture by Scripture, and tell them, that Christ is all in all; tell them plainly that they must not be found in their own righteousness; they must be *found in Christ not having on their own righteousness*, that they must *count all things but loss and dung that they may win Christ*; that there is no *other foundation but Christ, no other name under Heaven by which they can be saved, but the name of Christ*; tell them they must not come for Justification and Life in the name of their Good Works, of any thing that belongs

to

themſelves; but only in the name of Chriſt, promote this Doctrine in your Families and among your Children and Servants. This is the way to ſave you and your Houſehold. This is good, wholeſome houſehold Divinity, and ſuited to the ordinary Capacity of all ſerious Profeſſors. We muſt not ſend our Hearers to intricate diſtinctions, to learn the meaning of the Doctrine of their Juſtification. The ſenſe of the Goſpel is plain enough in this thing, they that run may read it. Come, come, you ſhall never be charged at the Laſt Day for giving too much to Chriſt in the matter of Juſtification. You are bound to aſcribe all to him, and you ſhall never be charged for giving too much. And certainly if it be poſſible to err on that hand, I had rather err in giving too much then too little to Chriſt. Do you think that a true Believer, who doth not look upon the act of Faith or works of Holineſs to be any part of his juſtifying righteouſneſs; but caſts himſelf upon Chriſt, do you think, I ſay, that God will reprove ſuch a perſon at the laſt day for aſcribing too much to Chriſt, and not pleading his own righteouſneſs? Certainly a Believer cannot plead the righteouſneſs of Chriſt without Faith; his way of arguing

arguing from Christ will sufficiently evince the truth and reality of his Faith; there needs no other proof and demonstration of it.

I should have made some Application. I will tell you what I intended.

First, To those who ground their Justification upon the sandy Foundation of their inherent Righteousness; I would exhort them to pull down the house presently before it fall upon their heads; and lay a better Foundation, if ever they think to stand before the Son of Man in his Day.

Then I should exhort them, and press them to study other Arguments, (as there are very many) to promote Good Works and practical Holiness among men; and not justle out Christ to make room for self Righteousness in the matter of Justification. What, must we work for Life still? To work for Justification is to work for Life, and why should we thus turn the Gospel into the Law?

I should speak also to those who are built upon the right Foundation, and have

have caſt themſelves upon Chriſts Righteouſneſs for Juſtification unto Life. Let ſuch be careful to maintain good Works; let them be Examplary in the practiſe of them; and bring forth fruit meet for the Kingdom of God. For as the Foundation may be too weak for the Superſtructure, ſo the Superſtructure may be too mean for the Foundation. And therefore down with all this Hay, Wood and Stubble, and labour to walk more ſutable to that Holy Faith under the Profeſſion of which you live. Brethren! The unſutable and uncircumſpect lives of Profeſſors, have been the greateſt ſcandal to the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith; it hath opened the Mouths of men againſt it. Therefore labour to live men into a Conviction of this Truth. Diſputes and Words will not do it, till you make it appear, that the Grace of God that hath brought Life and Immortality to light through the Goſpel, hath taught you to deny all Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts. This is the way to promote the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith alone. You that are built upon the right Foundation had need be careful and circumſpect. The Houſe is not yet finiſhed, we do all of us lie open more or leſs to Storms and Tempeſts here below, though

they cannot throw down the houſe, yet they may ſhake the houſe; the rain may beat into the houſe, may ſoak through every room of the houſe, may foul the houſe; may greatly incommode us and diſtreſs us. Therefore keep your Souls in good repair, keep them as tite as you can againſt Wind and Weather.

And for your Comfort I would have told you that Heaven will mend all the Errors in the Superſtructure, if the Foundation be right. God will then take away and ſeparate all thoſe weakneſſes and ſinful mixtures that now run along with all our Graces; all Cracks and Flawes, the ſinkings, and failings, the bendings and leanings, this way and that way in any part of the building, Heaven will mend all, will ſet all right and ſtraight; when we are Sanctified throughout, and the Top-ſtone is laid.

FINIS.

A

DISCOURSE

OF

REPENTANCE:

SHEWING

The Difference between Legal and Evangelical Repentance,

AND

The Neceſſary Connection between Evangelical Repentance and Saving Faith.

By Thomas Cole *Miniſter of the Goſpel.*

LONDON,
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A

DISCOURSE

OF

REPENTANCE.

A

DISCOURSE OF Repentance.

MARK 1. 15.

Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.

THE ſumme of the Goſpel lies in Faith and Repentance, which alwayes go together, and cannot be ſeparated, though they may and ought to be diſtinguiſhed one from the other: I have choſen this Text to ſhow the neceſſary connection that is between Faith and Repentance; that I may be the better underſtood I ſhall obſerve this method.

1. Distinguish between Legal and Evangelical Repentance.

2. Shew the nature of Evangelical Repentance, what it is, and wherein it does consist, how it rises out of faith, what its use and end is.

3. Shew the necessary connection that is between Evangelical Repentance and saving *Faith*.

4. The real difference that is between them, notwithstanding this necessary connection.

5. Inquire into the true cause and reason why the Professors of this Age, who are so much for *Faith*, do mind Repentance so little.

6. Apply all.

First, Distinguish between Legal and Evangelical Repentance.

You see the Repentance and *Faith* spoken of in the Text, have both of them a reference to the Gospel; *Repent and believe the Gospel.* We shall better understand

ſtand the nature of Evangelical Repentance, by comparing it with Legal Repentance, obſerving as we go how they differ from each.

(1.) Legal Repentance is the work of the Law, *i. e.* The work of the Spirit by the Law, for the Law works but faintly under the influence of meer Natural Light, unleſs the Spirit awaken the Conſcience, and ſet home the Law, little will be done, ſuch a work of the Law you have *Rom.* 2. 15. letting in a Spirit of Bondage upon the Conſcience, accuſing us for what we have done againſt the Law, and leaving us ſo convicted without any plea for our ſelves.

Evangelical Repentance is the work of the Goſpel, ſweetly melting the Heart by Arguments drawn from the Love of God, and his free Grace in Chriſt towards Sinners; it encourages a trembling Soul to plead with God for Mercy as the Publican, *Lord be Merciful to me a Sinner.*

(2.) Legal Repentance is all terrour and no hope, it riſes from the revelation of Gods Wrath againſt Sinners; 'tis a deſpairing Repentance without any hope of

pardon, the Curse of the Law lies hard upon a Man; he knows not how to get from under it, but lives in a fearful expectation of fiery indignation to devour him, he is a terrour to himself: But Evangelical Repentance leaves not an affrighted sinner altogether without hope, as I shall shew under the next head.

(3.) Legal Repentance is from worldly sorrow, not so much for the sin as the penalty incurred thereby, the apprehension of which is very dreadful to a convinced sinner; he is more affected with the evil of punishment, then with the evil of sin in it self; 'tis not for Gods sake but his own, that he repents of sin; he could love it well enough if it did not damn him: Though I do not deny, but a Repentance purely legal, may have some sense of the evil of sin as sin, not only as *malum prohibitum*, but as *malum in se*, as evil in its own nature; where common notions of good and evil are not utterly extinguished, it must needs be so, especially under a higher conviction from the Spirit of God, that gives us a farther discerning of the evil of sin, then the meer light of nature under its greatest elevation can possibly do. It was so in

Judas

Judas, *Matt.* 27. 34. he was convinced, not only that he had broken the Law of God, but that he had ſinned in ſo doing. *I have ſinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood*: He knew he had a hand in murdering a Man, a good Man, a great Man, who was more then Man; no doubt all this came up into his mind, concerning Chriſt, yet the knowledge of Chriſt that *Judas* had, did not reach ſo far as to beget the leaſt hope of Mercy from him; and here lay the legality of his Repentance; it was a deſpairing Repentance, he converſed only with the Law, and ſo ſunk under the wrath of God, and the curſe of the Law; he had none to accuſe him but his own Conſcience, the Rulers and chief Prieſts were for him, had ſet him a work and rewarded him; but ſeeing him under ſuch horror of Conſcience, he had done their buſineſs, what care they, ſee thou to that; unconvinced ſinners do ſlight the convictions of others, they may go hang themſelves for all them, they have no pity for them.

I ſpeak this to ſhew that legal Repentance may take in ſomething of the evil of ſin in it ſelf, as well as the deſtructive nature of it to us; though theſe legal convictions

victions of the evil of ſin in it ſelf, are far ſhort of thoſe more through convictions that accompany true Evangelical Repentance: Though the ſorrow that is in legal Repentance be but worldly; yet 'tis very pungent, it pierces us thorow, and pretends to ſome Devotion too, as if it were for Gods ſake, when ſelf is only at the bottom. *Pharaoh confeſſed his ſins*, and deſired the Prayers of Gods People, *Exod.* 9. 27, 28. *Saul wept for his ſins*, 1 *Sam.* 24. 16. The effects of Gods wrath are very dreadful upon convinced ſinners, may draw Tears from their Eyes, when they ſee what miſchief they have brought upon themſelves; they repent, but how? Not of the ſin, but of the puniſhment: Alas! What does that ſignifie, how ineffectual is it? What have we to do to repent of the puniſhment? We can't reverſe it; 'tis Gods part to repent of the puniſhment, to turn from his wrath, to ceaſe from his anger, which he will do, when we repent of the ſin that occaſioned it.

To repent of the puniſhment, is in effect to be ſorry that God is ſo juſt, that he ſo ſeverely animadverts upon ſinners; we wiſh he would let them go unpuniſhed,

ed, that we might more ſecurely go on in our ſins; the only way to eſcape vengeance, is to acknowledge the ſinfulneſs of ſin, and to repent of our great folly in committing it; ſuch a frame of Spirit bears ſome proportion to the Holineſs of God, argues true Godly ſorrow, which worketh Evangelical Repentance unto Salvation. 2 *Cor.* 7. 10.

(4.) Legal Repentance is before Faith, without Faith may never iſſue in ſaving Faith, as in *Cain*, *Saul*, *Judas*, but Evangelical Repentance does alwayes accompany ſaving Faith; and of this I am now to ſpeak under the ſecond head; ſhewing you

Secondly, The nature of Evangelical Repentance; what it is in its firſt riſe and original; upon what 'tis founded.

It came in with the Goſpel, the Law never intended any ſuch thing, the ſinner was to be cut off by Law, to die without Mercy, *in the day thou eateſt thou ſhalt die*, ſays the Law; *unleſs ye repent*, ſays the Goſpel; here is an exception put in (in caſe of repentance) againſt the peremptory Sentence of the Law. I ſay repentance

tance comes in with the Goſpel, *I will put enmity*, &c. *Gen.* 3. 15. Repentance riſes out of this Enmity. This ſeems to point particularly at the Converſion of *Eve*, who by Faith in the promiſed *Meſſiah* ſhould turn againſt the Serpent. *I will put enmity between thee and the woman*; this woman, whom thou haſt deceived, ſhall become thy Enemy, and bring forth a ſeed that ſhall break thy head, thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel, but his Death ſhall be thy overthrow. Repentance is a Goſpel Priviledge purchaſed by Chriſt, 'tis an act of Grace in God to injoyn us Repentance, as his leaving men in an impenitent hardened frame is an act of his Juſtice and Wrath. The Law in its Original Conſtitution, does not intend the amendment of the ſinner, but his utter Deſtruction; the Law can kill the ſinner, but cannot mortifie the ſin; Damnation makes no man better, but concludes him Eternally under ſin and wrath; the Juſtice of God is not obliged to turn a ſinner from his ſins, but to turn him into Hell for his ſins.

That which makes it a juſt and righteous thing with God to forgive the ſins of Believer, is Chriſts Merits and his own Promiſe; 'tis Juſtice in God to make good his

his own Promiſes, *Rom.* 3. 25, 26. 2 *Theſſ* 1. 6, 7. he is a debtor to his own promiſe, he cannot deny himſelf, 2 *Tim.* 2. 13. he owes the performance of his Promiſe to his Faithfulneſs and Truth; 'tis an act of Juſtice to himſelf to keep his Promiſe: God offers Mercy to ſinners, not becauſe they do repent, but that they may repent: Repentance is not the Cauſe but the Effect of Pardon, God always intends Pardon to thoſe whom he effectually calls to repentance; he gave no ſuch call to the Angels that fell; there was no Goſpel preached to them. No fallen Angel was ſaved, becauſe no Elect Angel fell, but there are many of Gods Elect among the fallen Sons of *Adam* to whom promiſes of Salvation were made upon their believing in Chriſt; this being publiſhed to all in the Goſpel, all who hear the Goſpel do put in for their ſhare in this Salvation, and that they may render the attainment more eaſie and feazable to them, they deny abſolute Election, bring in Univerſal Redemption, aſſert the liberty of Mans Will to believe if he pleaſe, and ſuppoſing it to be in their own power to believe, they conclude they may be ſaved as well as others, and this is the ground of all that ſecurity that is among common Profeſſors.

Hav-

Having spoken thus much of Evangelical Repentance as it implies a real hatred of sin as sin, and a real turning to God as the chiefest good from an inward change of nature renewed after the Image of God, I shall now shew you,

1. That such a Repentance can never be wrought in any by the Law alone, the Gospel has a principal hand in this.

Why not by the Law.

Because in the Law there are not sufficient motives and inducement to Repentance, nothing that encourages to it, that renders it available to mans Salvation, the law cannot give life to a sinner upon his repentance; the Gospel can, but the Law cannot, could a man under the Law, Repent, suppose that? What would he get by it, he must to Hell after all, the Law as a Covenant of Works does not seek to bring a sinner to Repentance, but to Punishment, the Law cannot give Repentance unto Life, because it cannot give life upon our Repentance.

You'l say then, is the Law against Repentance?

pentance? I don't ſay ſo neither; for take Repentance as 'tis a juſt equitable thing, as a holy diſpoſition of mind; ſo the Law is not againſt it where ever it may be found, as it is not againſt any other act of Moral Righteouſneſs as ſuch that a man may do, and yet for all this 'twill condemn a man for his ſin, and all his righteouſneſs ſhall not be remembred, though the Law be not againſt Repentance, yet it will not accept of repentance as a ſatisfaction for paſt ſins, but the Goſpel provides full ſatisfaction for the Law, and promiſes ſufficient and effectual Grace to the ſinner to bring him to repentance; having reſcued him from the Curſe of the Law, enables him to walk worthy of the bleſſing of the Goſpel, if thoſe who are juſtified were not ſanctified, they would live to the ſcandal of the Goſpel.

The Law cannot contradict it ſelf, having already pronounced a peremptory ſentence of death upon the ſinner, 'tis impoſſible the Law ſhould ever give repentance unto Life, the Law inſiſts upon the Execution of its own Judgment, and will not be ſatisfied till that be done, in this the Goſpel yields to the Law, to have execution done upon man for ſin, and pro-

provides a man on purpoſe, *the man Chriſt Jeſus, who bore our ſins in his own body upon the croſs.*

3. This Evangelical Repentance implies real Sanctification, but the Law ſanctifies no man, becauſe it can't convey its own Holineſs to another, can't alter the Nature of a Man, but only ſhew him what miſchief his ſin has done him, ſhews him his ſin in this or that inſtance, to his great terror, but if he happen to out-live thoſe terrors, and not die in the fit as *Judas*, his evil heart will encline him as ſtrongly to ſin, as ever it did before his former Convictions, they made him give a preſent ſtart backwards, but he will quickly recover himſelf, and return to his wretched courſe, he cannot ceaſe from ſin, though he know it diſpleaſes God yet he likes it never the worſe for that, might he but eſcape the puniſhment, 'tis not the wrath of God in it ſelf that he fears, but only as it goes forth in the penal effects of it againſt himſelf, elſe he could ſuffer God to be angry, and not be troubled at it, whereas this goes moſt to the heart of a Child of God, that he has incurr'd his diſpleaſure. *There is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh becauſe of thine anger*, Pſal. 38. 3. The Law alone

alone never works any real Sanctification in a ſinner; 'tis indeed the rule of Judgement, it judges us according to what we are, but cannot make us better.

4. Repentance is a turning unto God, but the Law gives no encouragement to a ſinner to turn to God, it holds forth the Wrath of God againſt him, that makes him run from the preſence of an angry God and hide himſelf as *Adam* did, how can dry ſtubble ſtand before a conſuming Fire, but God out of Chriſt is a conſuming Fire to a ſinner, he dares not come near him.

5. The law by it ſelf can't work a ſaving Conviction 'tis very Inſtrumental in conjunction with the Goſpel to do this, but of it ſelf it cannot. Saving Conviction is of the eſſence of Evangelical Repentance.

Saving Conviction hath theſe four properties.

1. It apprehends upon Scripture grounds a poſſibility of a ſinners Salvation, and not only ſo, but a fair probability of it upon the due uſe of thoſe means appoint-

ed by God in order thereunto, and leads out the sinner to seek relief in Christ, under some hope of obtaining it.

2. It works a hatred of sin as sin, strongly inclines and disposes the heart of a sinner to break off from his sins, and to betake himself to a strict course of Holiness: God offers Grace to sinners, because he intends to give Faith and Repentance to as many as are ordained unto Life, Faith inclines us to beg Repentance, disposes us to it, lays open the foulness of sin so plainly, so convincingly that we cannot but repent of it, under such a saving Conviction as Faith works in us, I call it a saving Conviction, because it puts us upon the diligent use of all means tending to Salvation; a man is so convinced that he cannot rest till he has found out an effectual remedy to cure so deadly a disease, nothing will satisfie him but Christ, we see not all that is in sin; till we see an absolute necessity of Christ to save us from it: Here is a deep discovery of sin indeed, when we know nothing but the Blood of Christ can take it away; *Behold the Lamb of God*, &c. a Sacrifice of Gods providing, all the Bulls, Goats, Sheep and Lambs of Mans procuring will never expiate sin, nothing

nothing that is among men can do it, but God has a Lamb, cherished in his own bosom from Eternity, this Lamb must be slain to take away the sins of the World, 'tis very astonishing to think what God parted with from himself to satisfie his own Justice; his Attributes conspire together to heighten and advance each other; infinite Grace lays out it self to satisfie infinite Justice, and satisfied Justice gives way to infinite Grace to glorifie it self in mans free Redemption.

3. It convinces us not only of particular sins, but of the general Corruption of our Nature, 'tis by a Divine supernatural Light that we discern this, we have a feeling of it in our selves, from an inward Principle of a higher Life raised up in us by the power of God in our Regeneration, which will not suffer us to walk any more after the flesh, we cry and complain of that proneness that is in us to evil; *O wretched man that I am*, &c. *Rom.* 7. No unconverted man is brought in complaining of the Corruption of his Nature, only *David*, and *Paul*, and such like, but none else. When we look upon the old man with the eyes of the new, we see that deformity that never appeared to us before.

4. It Convinces us not only of the ſeverity of the Law, in puniſhing, but alſo of the Holineſs of the Law in all its juſt and reaſonable Commands; *Rom.* 7. 12. This is a main difference between Legal and Evangelical Repentance, that Conviction and Senſe that is in a Legal Repentance of the Holineſs of the Law, is very ſmall, next to none at all, and that which is, proceeds chiefly from the remainders of light in all natural Men, left on purpoſe in the Conſcience, that all reverence of God and his Law might not be quite caſt off, and ſomething of this may now and then appear under ſtrong legal Convictions of ſin, as in *Judas*, but all this never begets any true love to Holineſs, for ſtill they go on in their ſins and have pleaſure in them that do ſo, *Rom.* 1. 32. which is a great demonſtration of the abſolute Dominion ſin has over fallen man, in carrying him on not only againſt the known Law of God written in the Word, but againſt all the natural Notions of the Law written in his own heart, nothing can hold him in, he deſpiſes God and man and his own Conſcience, he will not be a Law to himſelf.

Legal

Legal Convictions come ſhort in all theſe properties of ſaving Conviction.

Legal Convictions are either ſuch as are antecedent to the Commiſſion of Sin, or ſuch as follow upon it, which are properly called Convictions.

Convictions antecedent to ſin, are all one with the knowledge of the Law, by which we underſtand what is morally good or evil in it ſelf; what is ſin, and what is not, *Adam* and *Eve* in innocency were under this Conviction, they knew what God had forbidden, *viz.* to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, and that to eat of it in oppoſition to Gods expreſs command to the contrary, was a high act of Diſobedience, to be puniſhed with Death, but by the ſubtilty of the Devil they yielded to the Temptation, and did eat: if their perfect knowledge of the Law could not keep them in Innocency, from falling, how can we expect that our imperfect knowledge of the Law from any Convictions of that kind, which we may be under ſhould keep us.

And for thoſe legal Convictions ſubſequent to the commiſſion of ſin, by which

we see the obliquity of our own actions, and know our selves to be Transgressors of a holy righteous Law, they fall short in all the forementioned properties of saving Conviction, they leave us without hope of Mercy, work no renovation of nature in us, they may disturb us in the present act of sin, and terrifie us much about that, laying some present restraint upon us, but they work no real Reformation in us, *Judas* was in great horror of Conscience for betraying his Master, was much troubled that he should have a hand in shedding innocent blood: and yet under the light and power of this Conviction, how evil it was to Murder another, he hangs himself, which was as contrary to Law, as killing another: I speak this to shew how legal convictions may hurry a man from one sin to another, but they never lead him into a constant setled way of true Holiness, whence I infer that Convictions purely legal will never work Repentance unto Life.

How Repentance unto Life is wrought by the Gospel.

Because God hath appointed the Gospel to be the means of Repentance, *Luk.* 24. 47,

24. 47. *Rom.* 16. 25, 26. to the Glory of his Free Grace, as Juſtice is glorified in the Damnation of an impenitent ſinner, ſo Grace is glorified in his Converſion; Evangelical Repentance is from a Diſcovery of Gods Love and Free Grace: *His goodneſs leads us to Repentance*, *Rom.* 2. 4. 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *Pſal.* 130. 4. A true Penitent fears leaſt he ſhould miſs of Mercy, and come ſhort of it, he rejoyces at the good News of the Goſpel, begins to lift up his head in ſome expectation of a bleſſed Redemption, he ſerves God chearfully being perſwaded that his Duties and Services will be pleaſing to him and accepted by him for Chriſts ſake, *Pſal.* 130. 4. *Hoſ.* 6. 1, 2. a ſence of love and mercy quicken up a drooping trembling ſinner to return unto God, the Prodigal remembred what a kind Father he had, *Luk.* 15. 18. 'twas *Pauls* Argument, *Rom.* 12. 1. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. 'Tis a ſad thing that the Grace of the Goſpel which is intended to keep men from Deſpair, ſhould by ſome be made an encouragement to preſumption, God forbid we ſhould continue in Sin becauſe Grace abounds.

2. The Grace of the Goſpel is not only an appointed Means, but is in its own

nature a fit means to work repentance, suited and adapted to that end, the goodness of God leads us to repentance, the Schoolmen tell us that *amor est congregativus*, and they give this reason for it, because it does congregate and gather in our roving scattered thoughts from those various lesser Objects after which they go, fixing our Minds upon God, the only soul-satisfying Object. Love is conciliative, when God doth through Faith let in any sense of his intended grace towards sinners, the heart melts under it, a sinner does not repent that he may believe, but because he does believe, something of the Love of God to sinners in Christ Jesus, some inkling of this is come to his ear, hath touched his very heart, before ever he sets upon repentance, and now he can hold no longer, the love of Christ constrains him, great is the power of Love, when it commends it self to us in some signal expressions of kindness to our visible advantage and benefit.

3. Because Christ gives repentance, *Act.* 5. 31. he purchased this and all other graces for us, by dying for us, he not only obtained pardon of Sin in our Justification, but all inherent Graces in the Saints come

come from Chriſt, he procured them for us, he works them in us, his ſufferings being not only ſatisfactory for ſin, but meritorious of grace to be beſtowed upon us, though the Law can't ſanctify a ſinner yet Chriſt can, and 'tis an act of ſpecial grace towards us when he doth, but he will firſt ſatisfie the Law and Juſtice of God, that being brought under grace by our free Juſtification, we may anſwer to the Law of grace in our ſanctification, denying all Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts, living ſoberly and righteouſly here below as the redeemed of the Lord ought to do; the Law commands perfect Obedience, but in caſe of Failure, the Goſpel Promiſes Faith and Repentance, *Zach.* 12. 10. *Acts* 11. 18.

4. Becauſe God hath annexed a quickning Spirit to the Goſpel, to make way for his Grace, and to give it a prevailing efficacy in the Hearts of men, they are drawn by the loving kindneſs of God, and cannot reſiſt it, the Spirit opens the Myſtery of the Love of God in Chriſt, and ſo charms the Soul with it, that it is impoſſible to withſtand the allurements of it.

5. Becauſe the ways and means of bringing a ſinner to life, are all ſupernatural; the

the Law ſpeaks nothing of this, the Law never puts us upon any thing that is ſupernatural; I mean that originally was ſo to man in his perfect ſtate, for then it had been quite above the reach and capacity of Mans Underſtanding, but God ſuited his Law to thoſe inbred Notions and Principles of Truth, that were concreated in us, the way of ſalvation through Faith and Repentance being ſupernatural; we muſt apply our ſelves to the Goſpel to know this.

3. The neceſſary Connection that is between Evangelical Repentance and ſaving Faith. I prove, it thus.

Tis ſo in the firſt production of Repentance, and in all the ſubſequent acts of Repentance, therefore 'tis alwayes ſo.

In the firſt production of Repentance if you conſider how this was wrought by *Johns* Miniſtry, *Mat.* 3. and *Luk.* 3. theſe two things will evidently appear.

Firſt, That Repentance alwayes preſuppoſes Faith.

Secondly, That Repentance riſes out of Faith. And how!

I will

I will clear up this by a brief Paraphraſe upon thoſe words, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

John is brought in inviting ſinners to Repentance; the Argument he uſes is plainly this, God is inclined to Pardon you, therefore Repent: I come as a forerunner to prepare the way, that by bringing you the firſt newes of Gods intended grace and favour towards you, I might ſoften and mollify your hearts and diſpoſe you to a ready thankful acceptance of Chriſt, this offer of Grace is called the Kingdom of Heaven becauſe it is inclufive of all the happineſs that Heaven can afford: all good comes along with Pardoning Grace, I ſee ſays *John*, you are all lying under the ſad damning circumſtances of your own ſins, in a very woful miſerable condition, compaſſed about with Hell and Death, with horror and darkneſs, all things round about you, look very black and diſmal, I am come to put you into a better ſtate, to offer you a Kingdom, which will ſhortly appear in all its Glory; 'tis at hand, 'tis coming toward you, Heaven it ſelf is come to look after you to lend a helping hand to lift you out of this horrible Pit, before it ſhut its mouth upon you, ſee that you refuſe not this grace, that you put not from

you

you the word of the Goſpel, leaſt you judge your ſelves unworthy of Eternal Life, as *Acts* 13. 46. *i. e.* it will as plainly appear to be ſo, as if it had been ſo declared in open Court, upon a fair hearing of your Cauſe, if Heaven and Earth were to ſit in Judgment upon you, they would conclude you moſt unworthy of Everlaſting Life, and by putting the word from you, you have in effect paſſed this judgement upon your ſelves, or you have done that now which your own Conſciences will ſo interpret at the laſt day, they will then tell you you might have had life and pardon, but would not; you would not come to Chriſt that you might have life, therefore your damnation is juſt, you deſervedly periſh, & may thank your ſelves for it, how ſpeechleſs will ſinners be then: as to remain in impenitency under the outward Light of the Goſpel, does argue the height of unbelief, ſo to be brought to Repentance by the Preaching of the Goſpel does neceſſarily imply Faith in the Goſpel, 'tis impoſſible that a Tender of Grace ſhould work Repentance till 'tis believed, 'tis of no force, makes no impreſſion upon the Mind of a Man till then, therefore, Faith muſt be preſuppoſed, I make it out thus.

That which is brought as a motive for the

the doing of a thing, muſt be firſt underſtood, received and believed, before the thing can be done upon that motive: there is in the Goſpel a general offer of Mercy to ſinners, this proves an effectual means to beget Faith in all that are ordained unto life, upon their believing this general offer of Grace, their hearts begin to melt under it, and ſome inclination to Repentance is wrought in them, this Faith and this Repentance wrought in a more general way at firſt, do form themſelves into more particular and diſtinct acts afterwards, thus the principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, *viz.* Repentance from dead works and Faith towards God are firſt laid, and then there is (in the light and power of theſe principles) a going on unto perfection, *Heb.* 6. 1. Our firſt Faith is a more general Faith, and ſo is our firſt Repentance, rather an inclination and tendency to believe and repent, then actual Faith, or actual Repentance. Our firſt Faith wrought in us upon the general propoſal of Goſpel Grace, contains in it a ſaving Conviction of Sin, 'tis impoſſible to receive grace without it, grace is nothing to us, of no ſignification to us, but as it gives relief againſt ſin, which we muſt have ſome ſenſe of, before we apply our ſelves to the grace of God for Pardon,

don, we must see something in our selves that wants a pardon, and which we are willing to repent of and forsake in Case of a pardon, Repentance is as true an effect of Faith, as Pardon and Comfort, Faith first brings a sinner to Christ under some hope of Pardon, and then busies it self in working Repentance, in order to a comfortable sense of Pardon. The Spirit lets in some sense of Gospel Grace tendred unto sinners, and affects the heart with it, as very desireable, as a very seasonable offer, by no means to be slighted, the Soul begins to be taken with it, conceives some hope from it, and this is the beginning of Faith, and with our first Faith Light comes in giving us some Gospel Conviction of sin in order to Repentance, I call it a Gospel Conviction, because it is wrought by means of the Gospel, all after acts of Faith and Repentance have their rise from this first work, which brings me to the second Point, viz.

That Faith is not only joyned with Repentance in the first production of it, as has been shewed, but in all the subsequent acts of it ever after; which I make out thus. Faith and Repentance do constantly refer to each other in their several actings,

actings, Faith to Repentance, and Repentance to Faith; he that believes, repents becauſe he believes, and he that repents, believes becauſe he repents, *i. e.* as Faith is the cauſe of Repentance, ſo Repentance is the reaſon of every particular act of Faith put forth upon Chriſt for Pardon, 'tis impoſſible to make up the full ſenſe of an act of Faith on our part, if you fetch not the reaſon of it from Repentance. Why do we go to the Phyſitian, is it not becauſe we are ſick, weary and faint ready to die of ſuch a Diſeaſe; ſo why does a weary Soul come to Chriſt, is it not to be eaſed of his Burden? that inſupportable burden of ſin that is ready to ſink him into Hell.

If Faith and Repentance be thus always joyned together, does it not follow that we are juſtified by our Repentance as well as by Faith? I Anſwer, No. Though we are not ſaved without Repentance, it does not therefore follow that we are juſtified by our Repentance; but ſome to make good this Aſſertion have coyned many ſubtle diſtinctions, relating to both. Before I give a particular reply to this, let me ſay ſomething in general. Religion may be conſidered, either in its primitive purity and ſimplicity, as it was laid down

in

in the Fundamental Principles of it, by Christ and his Apostles.

Or as it has since been drawn through the various Discourses, Reasonings and Writings of Men for so many Centuries past, this has so much overcharged Religion with so many nice distinctions, intricate questions, and endless disputes, that it seems to be quite another thing then it was in the Apostles dayes: The best way is to return to the primitive simplicity of the Gospel, especially in judging of Fundamentals, which are plainly and clearly laid down there in Terms very intelligible.

Though Faith be the Gift of God, and is given of meer Grace but to a few, yet all who live under the Light of the Gospel may know what they ought to believe, which will render their unbelief more inexcusable; did we dwell more upon what is plainly revealed as fundamentally necessary to Salvation, we should better discern, by the light of those Fundamentals, the just consequences of them, in any deductions from them, which may not be so particularly and expressly spoken unto in Scripture.

But

But now to anſwer the query whether we may not be ſaid to be juſtified by our Repentance, as well as by Faith, ſince we are not ſaved without Repentance?

Anſw. There is a great deal of difference between Juſtification and Salvation, Salvation includes all qualifications belonging to that ſtate, Juſtification lets us into that ſtate; gives us right to Life from whence ſpring all Qualifications becoming that Life. Beſides, Saving Graces are ſo called, not that they are the Cauſes of Salvation, but becauſe they accompany it, we cannot be ſaved without them. Faith it ſelf as a Grace inherent in us, is no meritorious Cauſe of our Juſtification; 'tis that which carries us out of our ſelves to Chriſt for Righteouſneſs upon the account of which we are juſtified in the ſight of God, when we ſay we are juſtified by Faith, we don't mean we are juſtified by any thing in our ſelves, we can't underſtand it ſo, but the contrary, that we muſt be beholding to Chriſt for all. He that receives all from another, gives nothing to himſelf, he does indeed apply to himſelf, to his own uſe and benefit, what is freely given to him by another, but he cannot in any propriety of Speech be ſaid to aſcribe any thing to himſelf, or to owe

himſelf thanks for what he receives from another: Faith in its juſtifying act does not look to it ſelf as our grace, but unto Chriſt as our Righteouſneſs, the inherent grace of Faith is not our juſtifying Righteouſneſs, though it lead us out to him who is; Faith is the hand, but Chriſt is the gift; nay the hand it ſelf is the gift of God, as well as that which is put into it: God gives us not only what we believe, but he gives us to believe; the habit and act of faith are both from God, that he that glories may glory in the Lord only: And if it be ſo with faith, if that be ſhut out from being any part of our juſtifying Righteouſneſs, 'twill hold true much more in all other ſaving graces that ſpring from faith, whether Hope, Love, Fear, Repentance, *&c.* Repentance proves our Faith to be ſaving, ſuch a faith as gives us an Intereſt in Chriſt, faith adds nothing to the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, but applies it as it is, it only gives us an Intereſt in it, and makes it ours by vertue of the Promiſe tendring it to us, by receiving the Promiſe we have a ſure intereſt in the thing promiſed, and may ever after count it our own, and if we are not juſtified by our graces themſelves, much leſs by our good works, which are the fruits

fruits and iſſues of them, we muſt reſolve all our graces into faith, and faith it ſelf into Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs before we can be clear in the matter of our Juſtification.

4. The real diſtinction that is between them notwithſtanding this neceſſary Connection.

Faith and Repentance are frequently joyned together in Scripture, and ſometimes each of them ſingly put for the whole work of Converſion, and then they do alwayes include each other, and imply the whole work of grace in the Soul, as *Luk.* 13. 5. *Luk.* 15. 10. *Acts* 3. 19. *Acts* 11. 18. Though they cannot be ſeparated, yet they may be diſtinguiſhed, not only nominally but really; they are ſpoken of (*Act.* 20. 21.) as two diſtinct things, as Faith and Hope are inſeparable, yet two diſtinct Graces, ſo 'tis with Faith and Repentance, they grow together as different Branches from the ſame Root that bears and feeds them both, they are the two Vital Conſtituent parts of a Chriſtian, which have their diſtinct Offices and Influences: Repentance is the ſame in Principle with Faith, though they receive

different denominations, from the diffe-rent objects and occaſions about which they act: A principle of Grace is that im-mortal Seed, or that Spirit that is born of the Spirit; the fruits of the Spirit are not the Spirit it ſelf, but ſomething produced by him; all Graces are the fruits of the Spirit and are ſpecified by their different objects: All Graces are but ſo many ex-preſſions of that holy Diſpoſition, that is wrought in us by the Holy Ghoſt. To Repent of Sin is as true Holineſs as not to ſin at all; a ſinner has no other way to expreſs his Love to Holineſs, than by a declared Hatred of his Sins.

They differ in their Objects, faith as juſtifying, hath Chriſts Righteouſneſs for its Object, Repentance has mans unright-teouſneſs for its Object; as Faith acts up-on Chriſt for an Intereſt in his Righteouſ-neſs, ſo Repentance acts towards God, acknowledging our own Unrighteouſneſs and bewailing it, we cannot rejoyce in the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, till we mourn for our own ſins; Chriſt reconciles God to us, by the attonement offer'd, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20, 21. and us to God by working Re-pentance in us, who were Enemies to him in our Minds by wicked works, *Col.* 1. 21.

alienated

alienated from the life of God, *Col.* 4. 18. This Enmity against God and alienation from him, is removed by Repentance: Faith works upwards to appease Gods Wrath, by holding up the Blood of Christ; Repentance works downwards upon our Lives, changing our Minds towards God, that we may be conformable to his Will, and rebel no more against him. Besides,

All Graces do not imply, at least equally, the same Affections, there is more joy and hope in Faith, more sorrow and fear in Repentance; faith lifts up and comforts a guilty sinner upon one account, Repentance humbles him and lays him low upon another account, filling him with godly sorrow for his sins.

5. Reasons why the Professors of this Age who are so much for Faith do mind Repentance so little, are so seldom found in the Exercise of it.

1. Because they rest in general Notions of Faith, and of Justification by Grace through Christ; they say they have faith, and think this will save them, we may have right notions of faith in our Heads, and yet be under no real actings of faith

in our Hearts; we may be Orthodox in our Judgements, ſound in the Doctrine of Faith, and yet be ſtrangers to the Grace of Faith; we may hold the Truth, diſpute for it, preach it up, maintain it in our Diſcourſes, as our Opinion, and yet be rotten at Heart for all this, under the power of unbelief, if you know theſe things happy are ye if ye do them. Faith muſt be done as well as talked of, it muſt be really acted by us in our own caſe, 'tis not the doctrine of faith, but your faith in or according to that doctrine, that ſaves you, the juſt ſhall live by his own faith, the doctrine of faith is an external thing laid down in the letter of the word, but the grace of faith is an inward living principle found only in the hearts of real Saints, this is that I am inquiring after, and preſſing upon you as that that will certainly produce Repentance, *Zach.* 12. 10. 'Tis one thing to have a Notional Knowledge of the doctrine of faith as contained in the letter of the word, another thing to be under the power of the grace of faith as it paſſes thorow the heart in the lively actings of it: Notions of things may be ſeparated from thoſe effects that alwayes attend the things themſelves when they are in being, we may ſhake

and

and freeze under our notions of fire, but we cannot ſtand before fire it ſelf and not be warmed by it, were there more real faith; I mean of the grace of faith, among profeſſors, there would be more Repentance, let us not flatter our ſelves in the good opinion we have of our faith, and of our ſuppoſed Intereſt in Chriſt, 'tis all falſe, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our ſins, if Repentance do not accompany our faith: The viſible neglect of Repentance in the Profeſſors of this age, has brought a reproach upon the doctrine of faith, and cauſed it to be evil ſpoken of, that faith that does not ſanctifie, will never juſtifie, and without Repentance there can be no Sanctification: not that we make Repentance any Meritorious Cauſe of Pardon, or that it is to be reſted in as any ſatisfaction for ſin, only we affirm that juſtifying faith alwayes works Repentance.

2. Becauſe they reſt in a general Repentance, which they took up at their firſt Converſion, and that muſt ſerve all their lives long, 'tis enough they have once repented, that work is over, they have done with it now, and care not to return to it again: but becauſe you have

once repented, you muſt always repent, you entred into Covenant with God for your whole lives, to repent of every ſin you ſhould fall into, and ſhall we begin in the Spirit and end in the Fleſh.

3. Becauſe they have long ſince reformed what was amiſs in their Lives, and refrained from the outward acts of thoſe ſins they lived in heretofore, all this may be without any true Repentance, you ſay you have forſaken your ſins that is a groſs miſtake, for till you repent of them you have not forſaken them in Gods account, but are ſtill looked upon as thoſe who juſtifie your ſelves in thoſe very ſins, if not why don't you repent of them, you alwayes abide under the guilt of that ſin which you have not repented of, the turning of the heart to God, can never be without Repentance; till then you ſtill retain the good opinion you had of your ſins, your heart is ſet upon them ſtill, nothing but Repentance turns the heart another way. There can be no real Reformation of Life, without a change of Heart; Men may for a ſpurt force themſelves to an outward Courſe of Holineſs, but they can never hold it, the heart will go its own way, and carry the man after

after it, nothing but repentance makes a man a better man than he was before; a man is the ſame that ever he was till he repents, then indeed he is another man, of another Mind.

4. Becauſe they reckon all their particular ſins among their Infirmities, and therefore a ſlight Repentance will ſerve the turn, they think they will be pardoned of Courſe to them, without any more ado.

I look upon it as a great Error, to hold that all ſins committed in a ſtate of Grace are ſins of Infirmity; Saints themſelves may be guilty of wilful preſumptuous ſins, and when they are, they muſt not think to ſhift them off as common Infirmities. I grant, thoſe groſſer acts of ſin, that a Saint may be ſurprized into, do argue an infirm imperfect ſtate, their ſtate may be good though imperfect, there may be ſome good thing in their Hearts toward God, when they fall foul as *David* and *Peter* did; but I am not now inquiring what is in their hearts, but what is in thoſe groſſer acts of ſin, *viz.* Murder, Adultery, and the like; I ſay there is nothing but Evil in them, they are all over

over and throughout ſinful; now, what is morally evil and ſinful in its own nature cannot properly be called a ſin of Infirmity, becauſe an Infirmity in the true Notion of it, is the deficiency of a good Action, 'tis not ſo good as it ſhould be, abſolutely evil in it ſelf it is not, *v. g.* a Child of God prayes but not ſo fervently as he ſhould, he hears the Word, but not ſo attentively as he ſhould; he believes in Chriſt, but not ſo firmly, ſo ſtrongly, ſo ſtedfaſtly as he would, this is his Infirmity, here the action it ſelf, or the thing done, is for the ſubſtance and matter of it good in it ſelf, what God has commanded, but when we do that which is materially Evil in its own nature, and forbidden by God, this is more than an Infirmity, the whole action is naught; 'tis not a weak action, but a wicked one. He that is an infirm man, is a living man; a dead man is more than infirm, he has no life at all in him that is capable of infirmity, if a Child of God ſhould ſwear, be Drunk, or commit Whoredom, *&c.* I would not ſay as ſome do, Oh the Infirmities of the Saints, but I would ſay oh the Wickedneſs, the Leudneſs of the Saints; you'l think theſe hard words, hard things muſt have hard words, they that do well

ſhall

ſhall hear well, and they that do ill muſt hear ill: Sin is not the leſs ſinful becauſe a Godly Man commits it, it falls under greater Aggravations in him, than in another; there may be ſome good thing in his heart, but there is nothing in theſe ſinful acts but what is morally Evil and abominably wicked. This ſhould awaken us to Repentance, are there not ſins even mong us againſt the Lord our God?

6. The Application.

Repentance being the plaineſt and ſureſt Evidence of Saving Faith, let us be much in the exerciſe of this Grace: We ſhould repent as often as there is new matter for Repentance, I do not ſay we ſhould alwayes be grieving and mourning for the ſame ſin; Repentance may have its perfect work, in reference to ſome particular ſin, which God has ſufficiently humbled us for. There is a time to ſet broken bones, we may rejoyce in the Cure, in that Eaſe and Reſt that God gives us, when he ſpeaks peace to us: By believing we enter into Reſt, till ſome new ſin diſturb our reſt, and then Repentance is to be renewed: By a new ſin I don't mean common unavoidable Infirmities,

mities, but ſome groſſer willful Miſcariage: We ought to be humbled under our Infirmities, to confeſs them, and ſo to paſs on by a preſent act of Faith, into our wonted ſerenity and peace of Conſcience not doubting but God will overlook them for Chriſts ſake. Faith is not ſo put to it, does not labour ſo much to take in the pardon of them, as it does and muſt do to obtain the pardon of groſſer ſins, which put the Soul at a greater diſtance from God, then common Infirmities do, which are pardoned of Courſe to Believers upon their humble acknowledgement of them, but in caſe of any particular wilful ſin, we muſt renew our Repentance in a more ſolemn manner, and afflict our ſouls for it, how long God may keep us mourning, before he reſtore to us the joy of our Salvation, muſt be left to him who knowes when to adminiſter comfort to us, in the fitteſt ſeaſon: When we are about this work, 'tis good to reflect upon former ſins already pardoned, there ſinfulneſs appears thorow the Pardon. We may join our old ſcores to this new reckoning, and carry over all to the preſent Accoubt, that having the ſum Total before us, we may bewail the late addition we have made to it: When we ſee how high it riſes,

riſes, every new offence receives an aggravation, from ſo many that went before, 'tis ſome Extenuation of a Fault to ſay, 'tis the firſt time; but frequent relapſes into the ſame ſin do heighten the guilt of it, and in ſuch Caſes there is nothing but Repenting, or periſhing.

The more you are in the Exerciſe of this Grace of Repentance, the leſs inclinable will you be to any ſin: I am perſwaded were the Devil ſure you would Repent, he would not be ſo forward to Tempt you to any ſin, nothing does ſo enrage the Devil, as the Repentance of the Saints, could he keep them always in that Mind, they are in, in the hour of a prevailing Temptation, he might Glory over them, but when they come to themſelves, and conſider better of it, how do they inveigh againſt the Tempter, and cry down the ſin as an abominable Practiſe, and what does the Devil get by this, he loſes more by their Repentance then ever he got by their Sin, he is laid open as an Impoſtor, as a Deceiver; the Repentance of the Saints is the greateſt Torment to the Devil before his time that can be; as there is joy in Heaven at the Converſion of a Sinner,

Sinner, ſo there is no ſmall ſorrow in Hell upon the ſame Account.

You cannot Honour God more than by a Daily Repentance, thereby you vindicate your holy Profeſſion, from giving the leaſt countenance to ſin; were the people of God more aſhamed of ſin, the wicked of the World would glory leſs in it, they would begin to bluſh with you, and hang down their heads for doing that which is ſo openly decry'd by all good men, good men are greatly wanting in the open Profeſſion of their Repentance, if you did mourn for ſin more, others would rejoyce in it leſs.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

In the Preface.

THE laſt Page but one for ſins read ſin.

Regeneration.

Page 6. for God r. Ghoſt. pag. 93. for works r. work. P. 97. for diſcovery r. diſcourſe. p. 155. for *patulum* r. *pabulum*.

Faith.

Page 12. laſt line, for words, r. word. pag. 42. for *Loyal* r. *Legal*. pag. 62. for deniable r. undeniable.

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